MANAGEMENT OF BONESEED (*CHrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera*) (L.) T. NORL. USING FIRE, HERBICIDES AND OTHER TECHNIQUES IN AUSTRALIAN WOODLANDS

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# Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................................................................ II

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................................... VI

DECLARATION ..................................................................................................................... VIII

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ....................................................................................................... IX

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................... 1

1.1 AIMS OF THIS THESIS .................................................................................................. 3

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................... 5

2.1 PROCESSES OF NATIVE ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION ......................................... 5
2.2 GLOBAL PLANT INVASIONS – ECOSYSTEM DEGRADING PROCESSES .............. 6
2.3 THE ENVIRONMENTAL WEED PROBLEM IN AUSTRALIA ..................................... 10
2.4 CAUSES AND PROCESSES OF INVASIVENESS ...................................................... 12
  2.4.1 Anthropogenic and natural disturbance events .................................................... 14
  2.4.2 Climatic similarity ................................................................................................. 14
  2.4.3 Competitive ability in a novel environment ......................................................... 15
  2.4.4 Fire ....................................................................................................................... 17
2.5 A SHORT HISTORY OF FIRE/PLANT INTERACTIONS IN AUSTRALIA .................. 19
2.6 BONESEED AS AN INVASIVE SPECIES IN AUSTRALIA ....................................... 22
2.7 CHRYSANTHEMOIDES BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY .................................................. 26
2.8 DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND AUSTRALIA ........................................ 26
2.9 MANAGEMENT OF WOODY WEEDS IN TEMPERATE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS OF THE WORLD ........................................................................................................... 29
  2.9.1 Ecological weed control and restoration .............................................................. 29
  2.9.2 Physical and grazing weed control ...................................................................... 32
  2.9.3 Herbicide control ............................................................................................... 33
  2.9.4 Fire control ....................................................................................................... 35
  2.9.5 Plant competition control .................................................................................. 38
  2.9.6 Biological control .............................................................................................. 39
  2.9.7 Impact of biological control on boneseed .......................................................... 40
  2.9.8 Other control methods ...................................................................................... 41
2.10 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................... 42
CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS ................................................................. 44

3.1 MATERIALS AND METHODS USED THROUGHOUT THESIS ........................................ 44

   3.1.1 Experimental sites ................................................................................................. 44

   3.1.2 Experimental design ............................................................................................. 49

   3.1.3 Experimental timetables and treatments applied at each site. ............................... 49

   3.1.4 Description of boneseed infestations and native vegetation within each site:
       density, fuel loads, soil seed banks and native ecosystem degradation ................. 53

   3.1.5 Pre-burn vegetation preparation, burn conditions and implementation methods at
       the species rich and degraded sites ......................................................................... 54

   3.1.6 Controlled burn measurements ............................................................................ 55

   3.1.7 Herbicide application treatment .......................................................................... 58

   3.1.8 Plant recording techniques .................................................................................... 59

   3.1.9 Statistical analysis used throughout this thesis .................................................... 61

3.2 MEASURED VEGETATION CHARACTERISATION AT EXPERIMENTAL SITES ............... 65

   3.2.1 Measures of structural differences between ‘areas’ within boneseed populations at
       each site ....................................................................................................................... 68

3.3 VEGETATION DESCRIPTIONS .................................................................................. 77

   3.3.1 Management considerations for boneseed populations of a species rich infestation
       type and a degraded infestation type ........................................................................ 79

CHAPTER 4: BURNING BONESEED: FUEL LOADS AND DESTRUCTION OF THE
SOIL SEED BANK ........................................................................................................... 81

4.1 INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 81

4.2 METHODS .................................................................................................................. 83

   4.2.1 Pre-burn vegetation preparation, burn conditions and implementation methods at
       the species rich and degraded sites ......................................................................... 83

   4.2.2 Controlled burn measurements ............................................................................ 83

   4.2.3 Statistical analysis .................................................................................................. 83

4.3 RESULTS ...................................................................................................................... 84

   4.3.1 Controlled burn: temperature variability ............................................................... 84

   4.3.2 Controlled burn: temperature duration ................................................................. 91

   4.3.3 Impact of fuel loads on burn temperatures ............................................................ 94

   4.3.4 Depletion of the boneseed soil seed bank ............................................................... 96

4.4 DISCUSSION .............................................................................................................. 101
4.4.1 Persistence of the boneseed soil seed bank ................................................. 101
4.4.2 Boneseed fuel types and amounts required for effective burns ....................... 104
4.5 CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................ 107

CHAPTER 5: EFFECTS OF HERBICIDES, MANUAL REMOVAL AND SOWN NATIVE GRASS ON POST FIRE BONESEED POPULATIONS .............................................. 109

5.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 109
5.2 MATERIALS AND METHODS ................................................................................... 110
   5.2.1 Experimental design and treatment .................................................................. 110
   5.2.5 Statistics used in this chapter ......................................................................... 113
5.3 RESULTS .................................................................................................................. 114
   5.3.1 Post-fire boneseed seedling emergence .............................................................. 114
   5.3.2 Effects of post-fire boneseed control treatments on reducing the number and impact of boneseed seedlings ................................................................. 119
   5.3.2 Effects of post-fire boneseed control treatments on reducing the number and impact of boneseed seedlings ................................................................. 119
   5.3.3 Early herbicide treatment effect on boneseed seedling biomass and fecundity ratio at the degraded site ................................................................. 142
   5.3.4 New boneseed seed input into the soil across all treatments after three growth seasons .............................................................................................................. 145
5.4 DISCUSSION ............................................................................................................. 147
   5.4.1 Boneseed seedling emergence after fire .............................................................. 148
   5.4.2 Similarities and differences between boneseed control treatments at the species rich and degraded sites .............................................................................. 149
5.5 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................... 152

CHAPTER 6: EFFECTS OF BONESEED CONTROL METHODS ON SECONDARY WEEDS AND NATIVE SPECIES .................................................................................. 154

6.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 154
6.2 METHODS ................................................................................................................. 155
   6.2.1 Native vegetation and secondary weed parameters recorded and methods of recording for both sites ......................................................................................... 155
   6.2.2 Statistical analyses ............................................................................................ 156
6.3 RESULTS .................................................................................................................. 157
   6.3.1 Effects of treatments on secondary weeds ........................................................ 157
6.3.2 Treatment effects on native species at both experimental sites ....................161
6.4 Discussion ..............................................................................................................169
6.5 Conclusion - Control of Secondary Weeds .........................................................174

CHAPTER 7: GENERAL DISCUSSION ........................................................................177

7.1 Using broad scale disturbance mechanisms to manage woody weeds ..........178
  7.1.1 Fire ..................................................................................................................179
  7.1.2 Other disturbances for use in weed control ......................................................180
7.2 Integrated control: fire and follow up control prior to new seed set ..........181
7.3 A protocol for an adaptive mosaic of several integrated weed control
strategies ......................................................................................................................183
7.4 The economic and policy implications of this research .................................185
7.5 Future research directions for boneseed research in Australia .....................186
  7.5.1 Integrating biological control with ‘disturbance’ control methods ..............186
  7.5.2 Integration of revegetation measures ..............................................................187
7.6 Future research needs for woody weeds in Australia ........................................187

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..........................................................................................................189

APPENDICES ...............................................................................................................213
Abstract

Invasive plants cause ecosystem degradation throughout the world, including the reduction of native plant density and diversity, and changes in ecosystem structure and function. Woody weeds often grow faster than native species and in invaded habitats produce larger and/or more seed and outshade other mid- and under-storey species. Boneseed *Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera* (L.) T. Norl. has caused the degradation of many temperate woodlands in Australia and has not yet reached its full potential distribution in this country. The control of this weed is therefore a high priority in Australia. Biological control agents have not controlled boneseed populations to date and no detailed integrated control strategies exist for different densities of mature boneseed plants and soil seed banks in native vegetation of varying levels of degradation. Fire, herbicides and manual plant removal have previously been used to control boneseed; however, substantial landscape scale control has not yet been achieved.

Boneseed population control experiments were undertaken in two temperate woodlands in Victoria, Australia. In highly degraded temperate grassy woodlands at the You Yangs Regional Park west of Melbourne in Victoria and in a highly diverse native closed woodland at Arthurs Seat State Park in south-eastern Victoria. Several combinations of the weed control techniques of fire, herbicide application, hand-pulling of seedlings and distribution of competitive native grasses were found to control both mature boneseed populations and the large reserves of viable boneseed seeds in the soil. The efficacy of controlled burning, and the combination and timing of control techniques were found to vary according to differing densities of boneseed plants, viable soil seed banks and post-fire emergent seedlings.

Where sufficient fine fuel existed, a warm, even, autumn burn consumed above ground biomass, killed the majority of viable boneseed seed in the soil, and caused the remaining boneseed seed to germinate. Spraying with glyphosate herbicide was as effective as metsulfuron-methyl herbicide for killing boneseed seedlings along with the secondary climbing weed *Billardiera heterophylla* (Lindl.) L.W.Cayzer & Crisp after fire. However, the use of glyphosate also killed all native species, resulting in bare ground. After fire in species rich vegetation, boneseed was eliminated where seed of the native C3 grass *Poa sieberiana* Spreng. had been broadcast onto the post fire ash-bed, and seedlings had been sprayed five
months after the burn or where seedlings had been sprayed 12 months after burning. Boneseed control occurred when seedlings were sprayed five months after the burn. In degraded vegetation few boneseed seedlings remained where seedlings were sprayed 17 months after fire. Where insufficient rainfall occurred, hand-pulling flowering boneseed seedlings prevented new seed fall for 6 to 12 months.

Suggestions are made for the integration of these methods with the establishment and proliferation of biological control agents. A new protocol for utilising several integrated control strategies for boneseed and other woody weeds in a mosaic at both the site and landscape scale is described. A mosaic would allow for a variety of native species responses to fire and other control methods and thus lead to heterogeneous ages and structures within the native vegetation following weed control.
Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now or hereafter known.

Signed: 

Date:
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