



## Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Practical Weed Control Workshop – 25 June



Photo: Larry O'Loughlin

### By Clare Henderson

A bunch of about 25 people gathered at Araluen campground Saturday 25 June to look at on-ground weed control techniques. For those coming down to the Araluen Valley, there was a delightful scene of the bright blue sky and the fog over the valley. Larry O'Loughlin, Secretary of the Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Council ironically said: "Gee this could be what sea-level rise might look like for the Araluen Valley".

The workshop was led by Daniel Anderson of Apical and his team of Blake and Jess. This Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Council workshop was the third as part of the Araluen Creek Restoration Project.

Daniel has 20 years of practical experience of weed management, and he offered "to share what he had learned from his failures and the knowledge of the things that really work and are almost guaranteed" to save us some time from making the same mistakes. His take home message was "be strategic, weeds are a big problem, however you have limited time, limited resources, so do the things that make the big impacts. Sometimes less is more". He provided an overview of what we can do by ourselves, the low-down on various methods and needed materials, costs, time needed to clear various weed patches and follow-up. Plus, he advised on how to make the decision of what we could do ourselves and when to call in a good professional weed controller. We heard first from Greg Stone, an environmental consultant and a resident of the Araluen valley, who had walked both sides of the Creek and prepared a weed management plan identifying the types and numbers of weeds in the project area extending between Neringla Road in the south and Majors Creek Mountain Road in the north.

The survey identified seventeen species of weeds including:

- two Weeds of National Significance
- two State Priority Weeds
- seventeen Environmental Weeds
- one Local Management Programs Weed
- one Declared Pest Plant (ACT)

The most significant weed species identified across 91 survey sections were: African Boxthorn, a Weed of National Significance, which was recorded within 64 of the sections; Broad-leaved Privet, an Environmental Weed, recorded in 71 sections; Small-leaved Privet, an Environmental Weed, in 60 sections; and Blackberry, a Weed of National Significance, found in 19 survey sections. The workshop covered methods for control of these weeds at various stages of growth. And because there were some adjacent stands of Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) we had a good look at this new to the area highly invasive weed which grows over other plants smothering and killing them. Madeira vine is usually knocked out by cold weather but is now emerging in new places, perhaps which are not as cold as they used to be.



Boxthorn control, Penny Hayman, Secretary Upper Deua Landcare Catchment Group, with Daniel Anderson, of Apical with his team, Blake and Jess. Photo: Larry O'Loughlin

Daniel and his crew had a neat little trailer with all equipment needed for days of fun with weeds. There were a few containers of chemicals (including blue dye to add to liquids to show where they'd been), straight-shaft brushcutters with two-tooth shredder blades, a very small chainsaw which was demonstrably very handy for getting access to the base of weeds and providing scrapes and wells for applying poison directly to the plant, and a range of safety gear which Blake and Jess always wore when on the tools and sprays. Daniel took the approach that volume spraying of weeds was the last desperate step of weed management and was usually just a 'weed exchange program' clearing the soil for other weeds to colonise. Although the best removal of weeds was manual, there were now too many weeds and not enough time. The use of power tools and judicious application of herbicides – using additives to assist penetration and spread – could help deal with areas that would be otherwise overrun by weeds.

The strategy for dealing with weeds was to deal with the biggest potential problems first and to deal with problems bit by bit with ongoing monitoring and maintenance. Daniel's view was that we need to deal with Madeira vine, as a very high priority, lest it takes hold and crosses the road into the project area and takes over the casuarinas along the Araluen Creek. Boxthorn should be taken out and burned and privet managed by dealing first with the plants in seed or about to seed. And although we had lovely wild upstream blackberry muffins for morning tea we need to be removing it from the landscape mostly through spattering with herbicide. The problem grasses – African Love Grass, Chilean needle grass and serrated tussock – should be slashed, then sprayed when resprouting, say two weeks later.

### Fourth Workshop – Riparian Management

Reminder the next workshop, with a focus of riparian management will be on Saturday 23 July 2022. Express interest now to [upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com](mailto:upper.shoalhaven@gmail.com) or to Clare Henderson on 0412 425 665