

2004 TRAILS COMMITTEE INVASIVE NON-NATIVE PLANT PILOT PROGRAM

The 2003 summer issue of *California Coast & Ocean* contains an article, “We’ve Been Invaded”, which describes the increasing proliferation of non-native plants in California. As noted in this *Coast & Ocean* article, non-native plants “use a disproportionate amount of water, and replace local plant communities with monocultures, thereby depriving native wildlife of the shelter and nourishment they require”.

The Sea Ranch has not been exempted from this invasion. Of the 214 wildflowers described in her 1990 book, *Wildflowers of the Sea Ranch*, Elaine Mahaffey identifies 34 as “Alien”. More recently, Russell Beatty in his [Fall 2000 Soundings](#) article, “Alien Plants Invade Sea Ranch” lists some 12 Alien plants as “problems” at The Sea Ranch.

So, what actually is being done at The Sea Ranch about invasive non-native plants? Well, the Association has a program to remove Pampas Grass and Scotch Broom as well as monitoring owner plantings, while individuals have staged “pulling parties” for Australian Fireweed and Poison Hemlock. And these existing eradication efforts would undoubtedly benefit from wider Association membership involvement.

At its February 2004 meeting the Trails Committee approved a pilot program to assist in these existing efforts to contain/eradicate invasive non-native plants at The Sea Ranch. In general, the goals for this pilot program are for Trails Monitors/Members:

- To monitor/remove on or near The Sea Ranch trails the invasive non-native plants in the table below.
- To increase the Association members’ awareness of containment/eradication efforts.

The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) book, *Invasive Plants of California Wildlands*, lists some 74 invasive non-native plants. And, as noted above, Elaine Mahaffey in her book lists 34 plants as nonnative. Drawing on these two sources and the expertise of knowledgeable Association members, the Trails Committee selected the five invasive non-native plants in the table for this pilot program.

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	DESCRIPTION (available)
Australian Fireweed	<i>Erechtites prenanthoides</i>	Mahaffey: p. 67, Cal-IPC: p. 179
Bull Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Mahaffey: p. 94, Cal-IPC: p. 112
Cape Ivy	<i>Senecia mikanioides</i>	Cal-IPC: p. 154
Italian Thistle	<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	Mahaffey: p 94, Cal-IPC: p. 86
Pampas Grass	<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	Cal-IPC: p. 128

Table notes:

- Elaine Mahaffey book, *Wildflowers of the Sea Ranch*, available at the Association Office.
- Cal –IPC book, *Invasive Plants of California Wildlands*, available at www.cal-ipc.org

Roz Bray has agreed to coordinate this pilot program. To keep this pilot program manageable, Trail Monitors/Members should report to Roz sightings of the plants in the table only.

Specifically, then, this pilot program consists of the following elements:

1. Trails Monitors/Members become familiar with the five invasive non-native plants in the descriptions that follow.
2. Trails Monitors/Members report sightings of these five invasive non-native plants to Roz Bray. Please use some judgment here – Australian Fireweed is almost everywhere at The Sea Ranch, as are Bull and Italian Thistles. Any Pampas Grass and Cape Ivy sightings, however, should be reported to Roz.
3. Trails Monitors/Members, if possible, remove any of these five plants found within 3- 5 feet of a trail. Again, some judgment is required here. Pampas Grass is probably best left to the Association’s Facilities and Resources (F&R) personnel to remove, while thistle blooms as occurred in 2003 possibly will be beyond any individual effort.
4. Roz will report confirmed sightings to Bill Wiemeyer, who will arrange, when needed and feasible, to have F&R personnel remove the plants.

Australian Fireweed

Erechtites glomerata



Lance shaped leaves, unevenly toothed

Erechtites Minima



Deeply lobed leaves

Both are annuals or weak (short lived) perennials with dull, yellow, small flowers and an often branching taproot. Both belong to the Aster family and are spread by wind dispersal of seeds. They invade areas following clear cut logging but are weak competitors with other shrubs and trees. They grow in a variety of climates and are well suited to exploit fertile, freshly disturbed ground. They are demanding of nutrients but are weak competitors.

Removal:- Hand pull and monitor three times a year because of their large seed bank.

BULL THISTLE—*Cirsium vulgare* (Savi) Ten.



MATURE PLANT

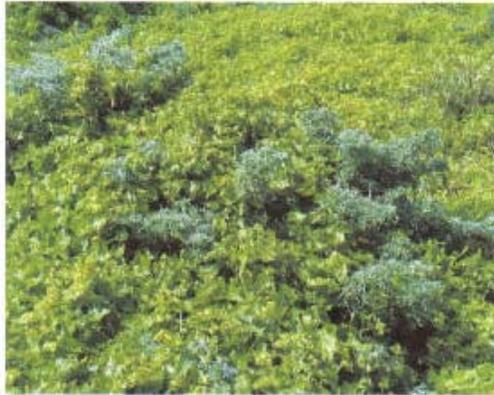


REGROWTH FROM CROWN

A coarse biennial, Bull Thistle is distinguished from other thistles by the following combination of characteristics. Leaf blades, especially those that are larger and deeply lobed, are rough to touch like medium sandpaper and dark green. Stems of bolted plants appear winged because leaf blades continue along the petioles and several inches down the stems. Flower heads are one to two inches wide and one and a half to two and a half inches high with deep purple flowers. The bristles on the pappus are feathery.

Cape Ivy or German Ivy

Senecio Mikanioides or *Delairea Odorata*



Aster Family

Long lived perennial vine with shiny 5 to 6 pointed leaves. One leaf at each node. Foliage is yellow green and has a distinct odor. It can be seen in all its horror at the Barn below Sea Ranch Lodge spreading over the lupins and other plants and along the fence. Flowers are yellow and about the size of a dime but the seeds are non viable in California. It reproduces only vegetatively. It is difficult to eliminate and needs to be monitored every 2 months. It can re-infest an area within 6 to 8 months after removal if left unchecked.

ITALIAN THISTLE—*Carduus pycnocephalus* L.



MATURE PLANT

The annual Italian Thistle varies in height from ankle to head high. Its leaves are white-woolly below, hairless green above, and deeply cut into two to five pairs of spiny lobes. The terminal lobe spine grows longer and more rigid than the other spines. Stems are slightly winged. Flower heads are covered with densely matted, cobwebby hairs. The thimble sized, rose to pink to purple flowers are clustered in groups of two to five. The flower heads are smaller and fewer than the Bull Thistle. The Italian Thistle has narrow bracts under its heads with many tiny, firm, forward pointing hairs on them.

Pampas Grass *Cortaderia Jubata*
Cortaderia Selloana - closely related



Perennial grass six feet tall with long leaves arising from a tufted base or tussock. The flowers cluster in a plumed pinnacle at the end of a long stem. Jubata Grass is easily confused with and often called Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia Selloana*). Tussocks of Jubata Grass are less erect and more spreading and not fountain like when compared to tussocks of *Cortaderia Selloana*.