

## Vital clues to weed control

Seen any weeds poking their ugly heads out of your paddocks lately? If so, don't keep it to yourself – researchers at Curtin University and the Department of Agriculture and Food WA really want to hear about it. The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) funded 'Emerging Weed Survey' is investigating what grain growers think are the significant agricultural weeds and will then compare this with field observations of almost 500 paddocks.

Researchers are also trying to discover if weed rankings have changed since 1997 when a similar survey was conducted and, if so, to determine what's changed them.

The grower's perspective complements an extensive wheatbelt field survey of weeds.

The field survey re-examined the same paddocks surveyed in 1997 to determine current and emerging weeds. More than 500 paddocks have been sampled, from Northampton in the north, east to Southern Cross and Esperance and south to Albany.

Scientists Dr Pippa Michael and Dr Roger Mandel are the Curtin researchers co-ordinating the postal and field surveys.

"It's important to find out whether or not modern farming practices, such as no tillage and integrated weed management, are changing the distribution and numbers of weeds for the better or worse," Roger said.

"I've been pleasantly surprised by the level of control growers have over weeds, with many of the quadrants we've looked at in the field survey being weed free.

"There's no magic bullet, as what works best is an integrated weed management approach, using a combination of chemicals and other control methods," he said.

"These surveys are about finding what weeds are becoming problematic under current practices. From here, we can focus efforts on understanding the biology and ecology of weeds so we can develop effective management strategies."

Pippa said growers clearly saw the survey's value and she'd had very positive feedback: "They're keen to know what's changed since 1997 and learn more about possible emerging problem weeds so they can be prepared."

**Pippa urged growers to return the completed surveys to her by fax 9690 1500 or email [p.michael@curtin.edu.au](mailto:p.michael@curtin.edu.au) as soon as possible. Growers are also encouraged to visit [www.grdc.com.au/weedlinks](http://www.grdc.com.au/weedlinks)**



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