

Weedbusters encouraged to grow the right plants

Community groups, local governments and individuals are being encouraged to register their interest in organising key activities for Weedbuster Week running from 6-13th October 2007.

The theme of *"Grow me Instead"* for the 2007 campaign aims to encourage gardeners in every city, town or house to remove invasive garden plants and grow non-weedy plants instead.

National Weeds Awareness Coordinator Andrew Clark said people organising displays and other activities was essential to ensuring the weeds awareness message was received loud and clear by gardening enthusiasts and the general community.

"By registering an activity on the national web site, individual organisers can avail themselves of free information supplied by state governments and a free T-shirt from their state Weedbuster coordinator.

"The types of activities that can be arranged are endless, from public displays, to weed clean-ups in community parks, weed identification walks or weed swaps for native plants.

"This year the nursery and gardening industry is also lending a hand by providing advice and information about desirable plants that should be grown and how to manage green waste from the garden to stop the accidental transportation of weeds to new locations," he said.

Weeds are a serious issue to Australia's economy, environment and human and animal health costing more than \$4 billion each year.

Mr Clark said the removal and safe disposal of invasive garden plants could reduce the threat to native wildlife and the environment enormously," he said.

"Take one invasive garden plant—lantana—it alone costs the grazing industry more than \$104 million each year and threatens 1244 plants species and 141 animal species in the environment.

"Once they're in our bushland weeds quickly spread to take over the habitat of native animals and plants, ultimately threatening their very existence.

"Sixty-five per cent of weed varieties introduced to the Australian landscape are invasive garden plants, which have escaped from residential and public gardens.

"Six of Australia's worst invasive weeds have degraded over 20 million hectares of our rangelands," he said.

Weedbusters is a volunteer community based program, which is supported by the Australian Government and state agencies—working together with regions and local government to promote awareness about invasive plants that become weeds.

For more information about registering your activity or to contact your state coordinator please go to www.weedbusters.info

For further information contact:

Andrew Clark, National Weeds Awareness Coordinator (07) 3224 8383 or 0414 369 129
or **John Cross**, Queensland Extension Coordinator (07) 3405 5536