

COMMON WEEDS

of Hobsons Bay

How to identify and manage
weeds in your home garden.



**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**





This booklet is designed for Hobsons Bay residents to identify the more common weeds in home gardens and yards and to provide basic advice around removal and replacing with more suitable species.

For specific weed advice and safe treatment, contact Council's Conservation Rangers on 1300 179 944 or email ranger@hosbonsbay.vic.gov.au

What is a weed?

Weeds are plants growing where they are not wanted, in competition with local natural systems or ecologies.

Why are weeds a threat?

Many weeds displace both native flora and fauna.

How can I prevent weeds spreading?

Ensure that all propagules, seed and other plant material, including grass clippings is disposed of appropriately.

How can I help?

You can help prevent weeds growing in our parks and reserves by not dumping green waste such as lawn clippings.

Unsupervised weed control is not permitted in Hobsons Bay's nature reserves. If members of the public are interested in weed management activities, please contact Council's Conservation Team.

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Advice provided in this booklet may not be suitable to your circumstances and any action taken is at your own risk.



HOW WEEDS spread



Seed eaten/carried by birds or other animals



Seed or plant propagules carried by water



Seed blown by wind



Seed or plant pieces transported by vehicle tyres and/or equipment



Seed spread by mowing



Seeds spread by humans via boots/clothing



Plants spreading vegetatively via stems, roots or leaves.

TREES / SHRUBS

Weed

Desert Ash
(*Fraxinus angustifolia*)



Mirror Bush (*Coprosma repens*)



Myrtle-leaf Milkwort
(*Polygala myrtifolia*)



Sweet Pittosporum
(*Pittosporum undulatum*)



Olive
(*Olea europaea*)



Suggested native alternative

Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*)



Common Boobialla
(*Myoporum insulare*)



Austral Indigo
(*Indigofera australis*)



Sticky Hop-bush
(*Dodonaea viscosa*)



Hazel Pomaderris
(*Pomaderris aspera*)





Weed control



Weed spread

**Desert Ash** (*Fraxinus angustifolia*)

Description: This is a popular garden tree which grows up to 20m tall. It has a dense crown with small purple or green flowers in spring. It has one-sided winged seeds that turn brown and dry when mature. This plant is often found emerging in mulched areas, produced by chipping the adult tree.

Tips on removal: Even when young, this plant is difficult to remove by hand as the root invariably snaps off.

Suggested native alternative: Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*).



Weed control



Weed spread

**Mirror bush** (*Coprosma repens*)

Description: Can be readily recognised by its shiny, glossy oval leaves with recurved margins. It can grow up to 8m and was previously planted as a hedge around Hobsons Bay. It is a relatively common weed around the municipality, particularly in areas of historical significance. Fruits are quite small and somewhat flattened, starting green and become orange-red with maturity.

Tips on removal: When young, the roots are quite shallow and the plant can easily be removed by hand. Mature plants can be controlled by cutting and painting.

Suggested native alternative: Common Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*).



Weed control

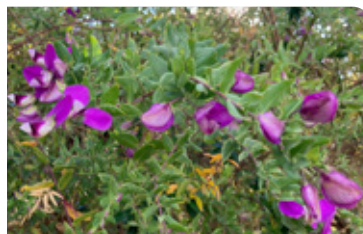


Weed spread

**Prickly Pear** (*Opuntia sp.*)

Description: A large cactus that can exceed 2m in height, with obvious spines and oval to round shaped segments. Red fruits grow on the edges of the segments. In agricultural areas there have been biological controls (the Cactoblastus moth) introduced to this plant to reduce the spread, which has been the most successful biological control in Australia's history. In Hobsons Bay this weed tends to be more common in reserves where it has been dumped as garden waste.

Tips on removal: Use sturdy thick gloves and avoid spines. When the plant is young it is easily pulled out but all vegetation must be removed as any piece left behind will commonly form roots and continue growing.



Weed control



Weed spread

**Myrtle-leaf milkwort** (*Polygala myrtifolia*)

Description: Evergreen 2m to 4m shrub with whorled-looking, alternately arranged leaves and pink, purple, white flowers. This species is no longer common in Hobsons Bay but has the propensity to persist in the environment for decades after an adult tree is removed, due to high seed loads.

Tips on removal: This plant can be removed manually.

Suggested native alternative: Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*).



Weed control



Weed spread



Olives (*Olea europaea*)

Description: Although these trees are widely planted in Hobsons Bay, they can be very invasive in native ecosystems as they tolerate most soil types and weather conditions. Council plants a sterile variety to stop seed spread.

If you are considering an olive tree, consider a sterile variety (like the street tree plantings) or avoid planting near fence-lines to stop the spread of seeds.

Tips on removal: Seedlings and small plants can be removed manually, however the top often breaks away from the remaining roots which may need to be dug out.

Suggested native alternative: Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*).



Weed control



Weed spread



Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*)

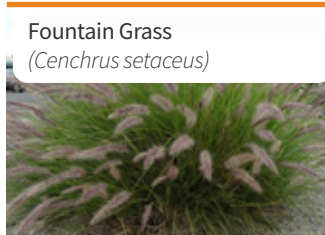
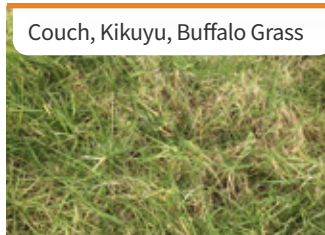
Description: Whilst this is a native Australian plant, it is not endemic to the Hobsons Bay region and due to its prolific seeding and relatively quick growth it has become a widespread environmental weed. It can be recognised by its dense foliage of undulating darker green leaves and fragrant white flowers forming in mid-winter to early spring. Orange grape-sized berries form after flowering. It is commonly found in people's gardens and spread along streetscapes.

Tips on removal: Young plants can be removed by hand. Mature plants can be controlled with herbicide.

Suggested native alternative: Sticky hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*).

GRASSES / GRAMINOIDS

Weed



Suggested native alternative





Lawn Grasses

Couch (*Cynodon dactylon*) Pictured above

Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*)

Buffalo grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*)

Description: These grasses are common perennial lawn grasses and generally spread rhizomatously. Whilst they can spread via seed, it is less common. These grasses commonly outcompete native grasses and ground covers in natural areas and can often smother small shrubs or young trees.

Tips on removal: These weeds are very challenging to remove by hand due to the extensive underground root systems. Solarisation are often the most effective methods. Summer is the best season to treat these grasses as they are actively growing.

Suggested native alternative: Weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides*).

Weed control



Weed spread



Fountain grass (*Cenchrus setaceus*)

Description: This is a robust tufted perennial grass with flowering stems to 1m tall and often mistaken for a native species. The flowers are pale purple to pink and the flower spike is feathery looking. In Hobsons Bay, this plant is often found in gardens.

Tips on removal: When mature, this plant is difficult to remove manually, even with a mattock, as the base can be quite large. It is recommended to cut off the flowering/seeding heads and dispose of them.

Suggested native alternative: Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*).

Weed control



Weed spread



Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*)



Buffalo grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*)



Veldt-grass, annual (*Ehrharta longiflora*)

Description: This is a tufted annual grass, growing up to 90cm high, commonly found in garden beds and natural areas of Hobsons Bay. It can be bright to duller green, and often has a purplish tinge to the leaves and seeds. The seeds are encased in a two-pronged capsule and tend to droop from the terminal spikes.

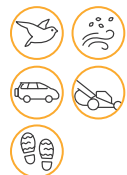
Tips on removal: Annual grasses are generally easily removed by hand and often pull from the ground in their entirety. It is preferable to remove this weed before seeding and/or dispose of seed.

Suggested native alternative: Silky blue grass (*Dichanthium sericeum*).

Weed control



Weed spread





Weed control



Weed spread



Veldt-grass, panic (*Ehrharta erecta*)

Description: This is a perennial, usually bright green tufted grass, growing to 60cm high, and can be commonly found in Hobsons Bay. This weed differs from the annual weed in size, seed spikelets and often colour. The seed head is generally a long spike, sometimes with some branching, at the termination of the stem. The spikes can be erect or drooping but the seeds cling closely to the spikes.

Tips on removal: Despite being a perennial, depending on the soil type, this plant can often be pulled out by hand and should be removed before seeding. It is advisable to use a small hand tool such as a pick or spade where the soil is tougher.

Suggested native alternative: Wallaby grass (*Rytidosperma species*).



Weed control



Weed spread



Wild Oats (*Avena fatua*)

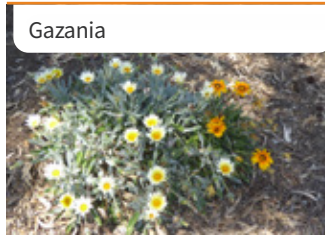
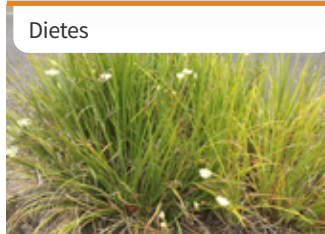
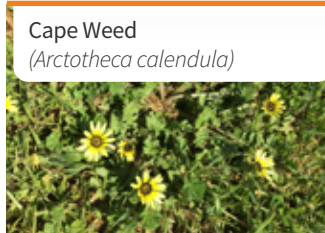
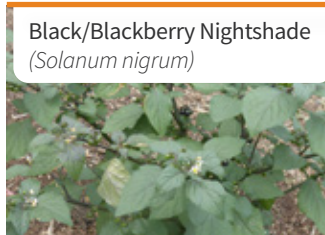
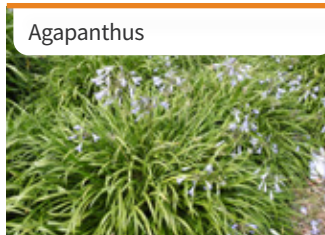
Description: This is a tufted annual grass that is most easily recognised by its flower-head that can grow on a spikelet to 150cm high. It has an open panicle and the seed pods tend to droop down when formed. Generally bright green when growing, it quickly turns to a straw colour when senescing. This grass is a common weed throughout Hobsons Bay and is primarily a threat in remnant grassland reserves.

Tips on removal: These grasses generally pull easily from the ground, but the sheer number can make this task overwhelming. One method can be to slash/mow before seeds set or mow with a catcher and dispose of seeds.

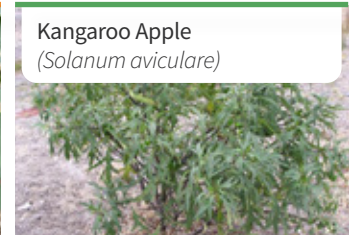
Suggested native alternative: Kangaroo grass (*Themeda australis*).

HERBS/ GROUNDCOVERS/OTHER

Weed



Suggested native alternative



Weed

Paterson's Curse
(*Echium plantagineum*)



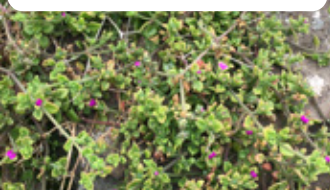
Thistles (various species)



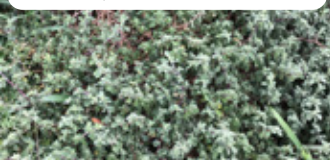
Mustard Weed (*Brassica sp.*)



Succulents



Carpet weed
(*Galenia pubescens*)

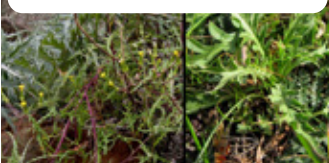


Suggested native alternative

Chocolate Lily
(*Arthropodium strictum*)



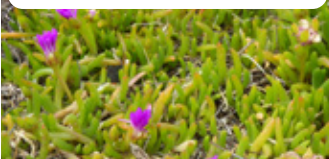
Native Fireweed
(*Senecio runcinifolia*)



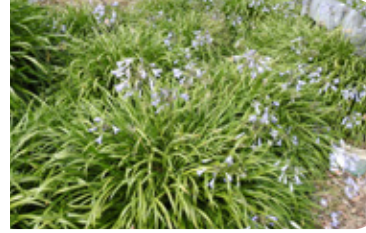
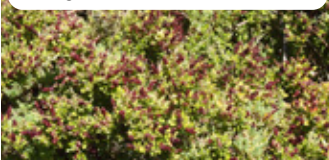
Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*)



Noon Flower
(*Disphyma crassifolium*)



Seaberry Saltbush
(*Rhagodia candolleana*)



Weed control



Weed spread



Agapanthus (*Agapathus africanus*)

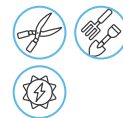
Description: Long, strappy, fleshy bright green leaves, with flower stalks that exceed the foliage. Flowers generally purple, blue or white. In Hobsons Bay, this plant has been commonly used as a 'border' plant along boundary lines or path edges.

Tips on removal: This plant is best to remove manually and whilst young; all roots should be removed. It can be difficult to remove once it is larger and very quickly forms invasive thickets.

Suggested native alternative: Spiny-headed mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*).



Weed control



Weed spread



Black or Blackberry Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*)

Description: An annual non-woody weed with arrow or heart-shaped leaves, ranging from 30cm to 120cm in height. It produces small white flowers in spring that become berries that turn black when ripe. Birds, foxes and other animals can spread the berries via ingestion. Please note that the berries can be harmful to humans.

Tips on removal: This plant can usually be pulled out quite easily when small and depending on soil type.

Suggested native alternative: Kangaroo apple (*Solanum aviculare*).



Weed control



Weed spread

**Cape weed** (*Arctotheca calendula*)

Description: An annual low growing winter herb with basal and deeply lobed green leaves. The flower is yellow, daisy like and with black centres. In Hobsons Bay, these weeds are mostly found in reserves that border with private properties, as they can easily escape from gardens and become a problem in natural areas.

Tips on removal: These can generally be removed manually.

Suggested native alternative: Native daisy (*Brachyscome* species).



Weed control



Weed spread

**Dietes** (*Dietes* sp.)

Description: A rhizomatous perennial iris, these plants have long strappy green leaves, growing in an inverted triangle like shape from the base, with medium to large flowers that are generally white with purple and yellow splotches of colour. In Hobsons Bay, landscapers will often plant this in new developments or as a border plant.

Tips on removal: Even when these plants are small, it is recommended to use a tool to ensure the rhizome is removed. When mature, they require a larger tool such as a mattock to remove.

Suggested native alternative: Flax-lilly (*Dianella* species).



Weed control



Weed spread

**Carpet weed** (*Galenia pubescens*)

Description: A perennial ground cover with succulent, oval grey-green leaves and pink or white flowers. The plant sends out creeping arms from a central root stock so can grow amongst and/or smother native plants. This weed is one of the more common weeds around Hobsons Bay however it can be mistaken for some of our native salt bush plants

Tips on removal: Best to manually remove by tracing all the creeping arms back to the central root. If the plant is mature a large hand tool such as a mattock may be needed.

Suggested native alternative: Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*).



Weed control



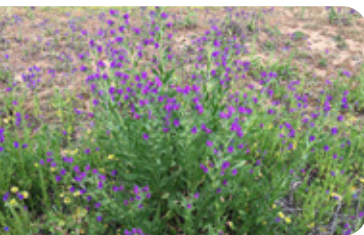
Weed spread

**Gazania** (*Gazania* sp.)

Description: A perennial herb with bright coloured flowers, usually yellow or orange petals with dark bases. These plants are generally planted in gardens due to the pretty flowers that can bloom year-round, however when they escape into natural areas they can spread quickly and outcompete native wildflowers and herbs.

Tips on removal: These can usually be manually removed prior to seed setting.

Suggested native alternative: Native daisy (*Rhodanthe* species).



Weed control



Weed spread

**Paterson's Curse** (*Echium plantagineum*)

Description: An erect low growing annual, occasionally biennial herb that develops a rosette after autumn rains. Purple flowers form on stems up to 120cm height from early spring. This weed has recently made its way into Hobsons Bay with introduced soils used in development or earth works and is one to watch out for given its potential to become very widespread.

Tips on removal: Manual removal can be used for small infestations, using a small pick or shovel, ideally before flowering or seeds setting.

Suggested native alternative: Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*).



Weed control



Weed spread

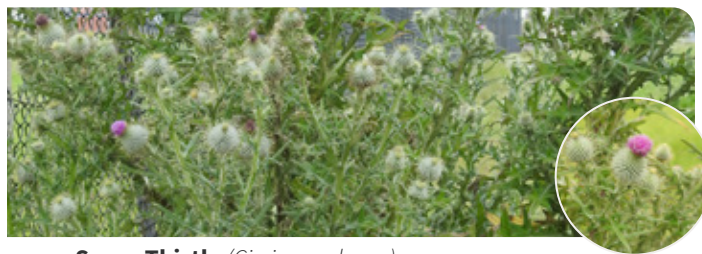
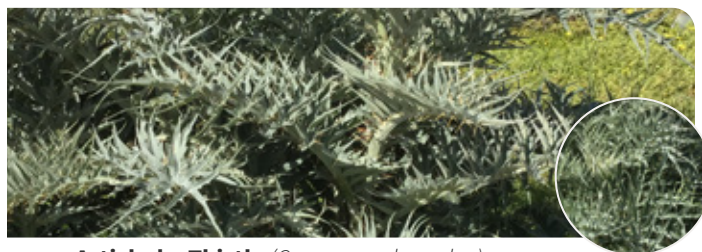
**Thistles**

Description: Thistles tend to favour richer soils and are commonly found in areas of disturbance or bare soil. Thistles are difficult to combat in natural areas as they seed prolifically. The following thistles are the more common ones found around Hobsons Bay:

Sow Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) (Pictured above) annual bright green erect small to medium herb, yellow flowers, milky sap;
Artichoke Thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*) perennial blue-green, large, spreading plant with blue, pink, purple sometimes white flowers;
Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) annual or biennial dark green large erect plant with purple flowers

Tips on removal: Manual removal is possible when the thistles are small enough. It is recommended to use thick gloves as many thistles have painful spines.

Suggested native alternative: Native Fireweed (*Senecio species*).

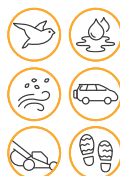
**Spear Thistle** (*Cirsium vulgare*)**Artichoke Thistle** (*Cynara cardunculus*)



Weed control



Weed spread

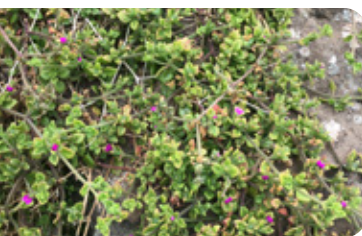


Mustard weed (*Brassica sp.*)

Description: Annual to biennial herbaceous plant with upright stems growing up to 1.8m tall. Leaves initially grow in a rosette at the base of the plant and are alternately arranged along the stem. Leaves vary in shape and size but older leaves are generally larger and deeply lobed. Its bright yellow flowers are in clusters at the tips of the branches. These weeds are very widespread in Hobsons Bay and they are quick to colonise after ground has been disturbed.

Tips on removal: Small infestations can be removed manually using a small pick or spade.

Suggested native alternative: Bulbine lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*).



Weed control



Weed spread



Succulents

Description: Succulents are common garden plants because they generally require little water or care but will grow in almost any soil type. This makes them some of the more insidious plants to infiltrate conservation reserves, because if one small piece of the plant escapes or is dumped into our reserves it will almost certainly grow in a very short time and colonise quickly. **Iceplants** (*Mesembryanthemum sp.*)(Pictured above), **Mother of millions** (*Kalanchoe sp.*); many other species

Tips on removal: Succulents are often easy to remove but it is important to remove every piece and dispose of it where it won't enter the environment.

Suggested native alternative: Noon flower (*Disphyma crassifolium*).

WEED CONTROL

methods

Weed control is most effective when the plant is actively growing and usually when soil is moist. Mulch can assist in weed control by reducing the amount and density of weeds in the home garden. The following pages describe in detail the advantages and disadvantages of several weed control methods as options to manage weeds in your home garden.



Weed control options
See table on next page.

Weed control options

Icon Method and description

Advantages

Disadvantages



Manual removal

Use hands to pull out weed or if required use a hand tool to dig out weed. Ensure all plant material is removed including any roots and rhizomes.

Tip: Removal is easiest when soil is moist.
Hand tools include; pick, mattock, trowel.

Instant result.
Low likelihood of damaging nearby plants.

Can be difficult in removing all the roots, bulbs and corms, this allows weeds to regenerate.



Cut and Paint

Cut as close to the base of the stem as possible, without getting soil onto the cut stem. Apply herbicide directly onto the cut as soon as possible for best results.

Almost always successful when herbicide is painted onto the stem within 10 seconds of the cut. Weed must be actively growing.

Hardy woody weeds such as African Boxthorn require a strong herbicide treatment.



Steaming

Pour boiling water/steam directly over the weed using a kettle..

Cheap, easy method to apply.

Boiling water/steam can burn the operator or bystanders.

Method generally only effective on young, non-woody and/or annual weeds.



Herbicide

Care must be taken when using herbicide. Always wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). Always follow the manufacturers directions on the safety data sheet (SDS) to determine the safest herbicide and method to use.

Be mindful that products that are labelled environmentally friendly may still be harmful to humans and sensitive wildlife.

Usually fast acting with low effort.

Selective herbicides can allow removal of weeds without harming desired species. Usually preferred in lawn type situations.

Nearby plants can be harmed if herbicide drifts onto them.

Some herbicides are effective for certain plants and not others, always check the label.

Risk of spills if mixing.

Personal protective equipment required and good knowledge of associated material safety data sheets.

Weed control options

Icon Method and description

Advantages

Disadvantages



Slashing/mowing

Cutting the plant before it produces seeds to eliminate growth and spread of plant.



This can be undertaken with a brush cutter, mower, or even shears depending on the plant.

Simple and low effort when using mowers.

Usually doesn't kill the weed.

Needs to be repeated often during growth seasons.

Usually, a long-term approach.

Shouldn't be done when plants are seeding as this leads to further spread of weed.

Can't access all areas with a mower.



Solarisation

Cover weeds with a non-porous surface material such as a tarp or black/opaque plastic for an extended period. Best results usually take a minimum of 12 months or more. It's recommended to cut the weeds down prior to laying solarisation material. Secure firmly ensuring that air, light and moisture doesn't make its way under the edges.

One of the few methods that can also help eliminate below ground seeds and rhizomes.

Simple application.

Understanding when to pull up the material.

Renders an area of you garden unavailable for a lengthy period.

It can be harmful to desirable soil microbes and seed.



Salt

Pour table salt on weeds.

Environmentally friendly approach.

Best for small herb like weeds in between pavers.

More suitable for small scale applications.

May have to use large quantities of salt to be effective.



NATIVES

*that look similar
to weeds*

Some plants are challenging to identify.

Several weed species mentioned in this booklet could easily be confused with similar native species to the untrained eye. Therefore, it is highly recommend you seek an expert opinion before removing a plant if you are not certain.

Over the page are some examples of weeds that resemble a native plant. Test your knowledge by comparing the examples.



Spear grass (*Austrostipa* sp.)



Chilean Needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*)



Sea Rush (*Juncus kraussii*)



Spiny rush (*Juncus acutus*)



Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*)



Carpet weed (*Galenia pubescens*)



Dianella sp.



Dietes (*Dietes* sp.)



Glossary

Annual: A plant that only lives for one year; sometimes individuals will survive for two years.

Endemic: For the purpose of this booklet, this term refers to a native plant that would have been found naturally within the geographical region of Hobsons Bay prior to 1788.

Graminoid: Low growing sometimes tufted plants that include grasses, sedges, reeds and rushes etc

Panicle: A set of flowering branches
(see grass illustration, pg 15)

Perennial: A plant that lives for more than 1 to 2 years.

Propagule: An element of a plant that can vegetatively reproduce; asexual reproduction.

Recurved margins: Where the margins of a leaf are curved towards the underside of the leaf.

Rosette: A circular arrangement of leaves or leaf-like structures.

Rhizome/Rhizomatous: An underground plant stem capable of producing shoots and roots of a new plant. Rhizomes store starches and proteins and enable plants to survive underground. A rhizomatous plant is one which has this root structure.

Senescing: When a plant is withering or dying naturally.

Spikelet: The basic unit of a graminoid inflorescence
(see grass illustration, pg 15)

Stolon/Stoloniferous: A slender stem that grows horizontally along the ground giving rise to roots and aerial branches; also called a runner. A stoloniferous plant is one which has this root structure.



Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waterways in Hobsons Bay. We respect their deep connection with the land and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also recognise the rich natural assets it holds, from the coastline and saltmarsh to the grasslands and creeks, abundant with diverse wildlife and flora. Fostering a learning and caring approach to these important eco-systems, we are committed to incorporating these values into our conversations, work, and daily lives to enhance our local environment.



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