

BIO-HAZARD

Chromolaena

Chromolaena odorata (Triffid weed), a native of South and Central America, has become one of the world's 100 worst alien invasive species (Global Invasive Species Specialist Group). It has become invasive in western, central and southern Africa, India, Southeast Asia and Oceania. It was accidentally introduced into Durban during the Second World War (1939 – 1945) and has experienced a population explosion since.

Identification

Description: Scrambling, sparsely hairy shrub reaching heights of 4m or higher. Often form dense thickets.

Leaves: Occur in pairs and are ovate to triangular in shape with a tapering point. They vary in colour from light to medium green and have three conspicuous veins.

Flowers: Chromolaena flowers from June to December and produces white or pale blue flowers. Flowers are situated terminally.

Fruits: The seeds are narrow, linear and dark brown in colour. Each seed has feathery white bristles at one end which form a parachute enabling the seed to disperse easily through the air.



Figure 1: Chromolaena flower



Figure 2: Chromolaena seed head

Damage

Chromolaena is capable of growing up through the canopy of indigenous vegetation, forms a dense canopy itself and eventually shades out and kills indigenous plants. It is also extremely flammable, hence the name “paraffienbos” and therefore poses a great fire hazard.

Control

Although biological control is being investigated, control of the plant depends on mechanical and chemical methods. It is imperative that plants are removed wherever found and that the area is closely monitored to prevent further infestation.

Contact address

Please report any sightings of Chromolaena in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park to:

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