

Biological Control of Paterson's Curse: After the Injunction

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Paterson's curse/salvation Jane, *Echium plantagineum* (Boraginaceae), is a highly competitive and poisonous, winter-growing, annual weed from Mediterranean Europe. It was the subject of the most intense conflict-of-interest in the history of biological control. The program was held up for nearly 8.5 yrs by an injunction granted to 2 beekeepers and 2 graziers. During those years: the world's first legislation for biological control was passed in Australia; a public enquiry was held into the costs and benefits of the program; complementary State legislation was passed; the program was approved following the enquiry; and biological control was legitimized in Australia. This integrated weed management program, combining biological control as the key strategy with cultural and chemical control, has complementary Australian and European activities. Since the injunction was lifted in 1989, CSIRO and several States have developed an Australia-wide collaborative evaluation program. A moth, *Dialectica scariella*, has been established widely. A weevil, *Ceutorhynchus larvatus*, was released and is being evaluated. A second weevil, *C. geographicus*, is being mass-reared by CSIRO for field release and for cooperators. Host-specificity testing for a moth, *Ethmia bipunctella*, has begun. In Europe, activities include ecological investigations of the herbivore: weed system, preliminary host-specificity testing, and collection and shipment of agents to Australia. There is excellent potential for control of *E. plantagineum*, because the complex of natural enemies in Europe contains species which attack *E. plantagineum* at critical life stages.

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