

WEED INFORMATION SHEET

Groundsel Bush



GROUNDSEL BUSH – *Baccharis halimifolia*, is a native of the eastern coast of North America. It was first introduced into Australia as an ornamental and by 1900 had become naturalised.

DESCRIPTION – Groundsel bush is a densely branched shrub, usually 1.5 to 3 m high, although sometimes grows into a small tree up to 7 m high. Leaves are alternate, 2.5 to 5 cm long, 1 to 2.5 cm wide, wedge shaped and prominently toothed, particularly near the tip. Stems have characteristic striped bark. Male and female flowers are on separate plants; male flowers are cream and female are white. Seeds are very small and light. On the top of each seed grows tufts of white hairs which give the female plant a fluffy appearance when in full flower. Flowers mature and seeds drop between April and May, depending on seasonal conditions.

WHY IS IT A WEED – Groundsel is a rapid coloniser of cleared, unused and overgrazed land and is particularly suited to moist gullies, salt marsh areas and wetlands. It is also a major weed of coastal pine forests where there is little ground cover to compete with seedlings.

It can be poisonous, Groundsel bush is reputed to be poisonous to horses, and also possibly sheep. Cattle lose condition rapidly when forced to graze it; it has no value as stockfeed and heavy infestations can greatly reduce carrying capacities.

