

# Creating an Indigenous Garden

## Weed Control:

Weeds compete with garden plants for light, nutrients and water and are usually better (and faster) at propagating from seeds or, in the case of Buffalo or Couch grass, from stolons and rhizomes, or bulbs, like Oxalis.

Many environmental weeds originate as garden escapees (seed carried by birds/animals/wind etc.) and from garden waste. Seed, fruit, vegetative material and roots all have the potential to establish and become environmental weeds.

What can you do to help reduce the impact of environmental weeds?

Learn to recognize environmental weeds and don't plant them in your garden. Remove any potential weeds from your garden.

Dispose of garden waste properly – compost garden waste wherever possible or dispose of it at an approved Council Landfill.

Protect areas of native vegetation and grow local native plants.

Report infestations to Council, Department of Environment and Primary Industries or Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.



**Bulbous weeds like Oxalis [Left] or Angled Onion [Right] can either be dug out - taking care to remove all bulbs**

A weed management plan for the home garden will ensure the most efficient use of your time. There are a few general things that can keep weeds to a minimum:

- Mulching - a sufficiently thick layer of mulch will achieve a degree of weed suppression by cutting out light.
- Filling empty spaces in the garden with desired vegetation. Many weeds move into disturbed or empty areas. If you have such areas in your garden, consider filling them with ground covers. Dense groundcover works similar to mulching, as it covers the ground, cutting out light for any weeds that may germinate. In addition, groundcovers use up soil nutrients, thus making it more difficult for weeds to establish, and the number of weeds in such an area can be significantly reduced.
- The most common method of removing weeds is to pull them out by hand. This will work well for weeds that do not have stolons, rhizomes or bulbs. These can regenerate from any remaining piece of the root system with a growing point, using the starch stored in the roots as energy.
- The easiest method of removing those weeds is spraying them with Glyphosate (commercially available). Glyphosate translocates from the leaves into stems and roots and bulbs. Spraying should be done when the weed is actively growing and preferably before it has a chance to set seed.
- If you are not comfortable using a chemical herbicide, try one of a number of available organic, non-chemical alternatives available from retail nurseries.
- Alternatively, you could solarise those weeds. This will only be feasible in summer, when the sun is hot. Cover the weedy area with black plastic - this will deprive the weeds of light and water in addition to the heat it will generate - and for Couch and Buffalo Grass leave it on for 6-8 weeks at least. When you remove the plastic cover, the grass should look white (no chlorophyll left). This method will not be satisfactory for bulbous weeds like Oxalis or Angled Onion. They will have to either be dug out or sprayed.

**Environmental weeds are non-indigenous plants that have the potential to infest natural bushland and suppress indigenous vegetation. Some plants that are sold as garden plants have high weed potential. Some of the major threats are Agapanthus, Arum Lily, Honeysuckle, Ivy, Broom species and Blue Periwinkle. A list of the common environmental weeds found in Warrnambool and the suggested methods of removal, are available elsewhere on this web site.**