

Fire excites a hidden seed bank

It is clear to see the fires of the 2019 - 2020 summer throughout the Nambucca Valley have in some places scorched the bush land and agricultural infrastructure and in others areas burnt through the understory. In either manner the fire opens up the ground to light and exposes or excites some seeds of hardy species. Now that the rains have come the regeneration of these areas is slowly unfolding with new life popping up from the exposed ground. A lot of the regeneration is remarkable with native grasses and legumes, ground covers and orchids springing from the toasted earth. In some areas that were noted for thick lantana understories the diversity that has emerged after the fire is staggering. Where the fire was extremely hot a lot of the trees may unfortunately be dead as can be seen on the ridges throughout the Taylors Arm, Utungun and South Arm areas and most of the soil seed bank destroyed from the heat, in these areas the process is understandably slow.

Hot burn or cold burn fire excites seeds in the soil that may have been lying dormant for decades. Some of the new emergent have not been seen growing in the burnt areas before. Species like Dye berry, Glossy night shade, black night shade, kangaroo apple, eastern solanum, goose berry.

It is important to note that some of these types of “weeds” are also native plants that naturally thrive of newly disturbed ground and as the shade returns from regeneration of the canopy trees they will slowly over the years dwindle.



Black Nightshade



Silver leaf Nightshade (Native)



Eastern Nightshade (Native)



Kangaroo Apple (Native)



Glossy Nightshade



American poke root or Dye Berry



Twining Glycine (Native)



Wild Goose Berry

Other weeds that may have been excited from the disturbance in the bush or the paddock are Thorn apple, lantana, white passion fruit, Giant devils fig, Tropical Soda Apple, Giant rats tail grass, Yellow bells, and more



Giant Devils Fig



Thorn Apple



Giant Rats Tail grass

If you have areas of land that were burnt or just laid waste from the drought and you are unsure of what is emerging and if you have a possible weed burden please contact your local councils and ask for the Biosecurity officer to come and undertake a free inspection to assist in the identification of weed species and give advice or assistance on their management.