more than one way to kill a weed

BIODIVERSITY

Colin Sedgman has it in for the English Broom. One of Victoria's worst weeds, it has spread into the Omeo and Benambra district, where he lives.

contact: Colin Sedgman
email: ctsedgman@bigpond.com

Colin Sedgman has it in for the English Broom. One of Victoria's worst weeds, it has spread into the Omeo and Benambra district, where he lives. Colin is employed as a community Works Facilitator by the Benambra Dinner Plain Omeo Landcare Group to assist the community run programs.

This joint group project, funded by the North East CMA, through the Victorian Government's Second Generation Landcare Grants, involves facilitating private and public land managers to manage weeds in the Benambra, Omeo and Dinner Plain areas. Activities include information and education events, bulk chemical purchases for landholders, coordinated bio-control releases with Parks Victoria, and working with state and local government. The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority has joined these control efforts to prevent the broom from becoming a major weed in our waterways.

Controlling English Broom is expensive and requires persistence. Scientists are turning increasingly to biological control - that is, using the plants' natural enemies against them. The European twig mining moth (Leucoptera spartifoliella) is currently the best established ammunition in the growing arsenal of natural controls. Colin regularly collects the moth larvae in the Braidwood area of NSW and releases it in unsprayed broom-infested areas.

This long term project is showing results. Larval activity causes the twigs to be weakened and die. Heavily attacked shrubs become covered with dead wood and produce about half the amount of seeds as unattacked plants.

'Even though it's a long term project, it's worth it because of the cost efficiency and the fact that it's self perpetuating .

Bio-control to me is the only... long-term solution we're going to have.'