

# Salvation Jane (*Echium plantagineum*)

November 2015



Image credit: John Wills

Inspecting the damage of biocontrol agents in a thick infestation of Salvation Jane

Salvation Jane is an annual winter weed of pastures that poses a particular poisoning threat to horses.

It is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (NRM Act).

## Description

Salvation Jane is an annual herb that grows from a sturdy taproot.

Leaves are produced in autumn and winter in a flat-lying rosette. The leaves are light-green, hairy and egg-shaped, growing up to 30 cm long. The leaves have distinct, branched veins.

Flowering stems are produced in late winter from the centre of the rosette. The stems are unbranched, hairy and normally reach a height of 60 cm. The stem leaves are smaller and narrower than the rosette leaves.

The stems develop flowers from September to December. The flowers are trumpet-like and mostly purple, but occasionally white, blue and pink. Up to four seeds develop from each flower.

Plants normally die in summer.

Individual plants can produce more than 5000 seeds per year, which accumulates in the soil to form a large seedbank. Seeds may remain dormant in the soil for up to 5 years.

Salvation Jane is valuable to the honey industry, providing an early source of pollen.

## Impacts

Salvation Jane is a significant pasture weed. The plant's early winter growth allows it to out-compete pasture seedlings. The large, flat rosettes smother adjacent plants it can become the dominant species in pastures.

The plant produces poisonous alkaloids that affect livestock, particularly horses and pigs. After feeding on Salvation Jane for a period of weeks, animals lose condition resulting in serious health issues.

Salvation Jane can contribute to soil erosion by suppressing perennial grasses in spring. When it dies off in summer, bare soil is exposed.

In autumn, seedlings may be so dense that they completely dominate other species.

Salvation Jane may be eaten by stock when young, but when abundant it reduces the overall quality and quantity of useful fodder.

It is also a source of hayfever and allergies in humans. Some people are allergic to the pollen. The hairy texture of the leaves and stems can cause skin irritation.

Salvation Jane can impact on native vegetation, particularly in disturbed areas where it suppresses the growth and recovery of native species.



Government of  
South Australia



Natural Resources  
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Image credit: John Wills A grazing paddock with Salvation Jane

## Distribution

Salvation Jane was introduced to Australia from Europe as an ornamental garden plant.

It is present throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges region and grows on a wide range of soils.

Salvation Jane reproduces by seed. It is commonly spread via contaminated hay and grain, livestock droppings and machinery. Birds also spread seed.

Some seeds remain dormant in the soil for many years and cultivation appears to stimulate germination. Mowing or grazing the flowering plants encourages new shoots that will flower out of season.

## Control methods

Biological control agents (biocontrols) have been very successful in reducing the abundance of Salvation Jane.

However the weed remains widespread and ongoing monitoring is required to confirm that biocontrols are still present in the landscape.

For advice on chemical control techniques contact your nearest Natural Resources Centre. Please refer to the *Weed control handbook for declared plants in South Australia* for advice on chemical control. You can find it on Biosecurity SA's website at [www.pir.sa.gov.au](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au)

## Declarations

The following sections of the NRM Act apply to Salvation Jane in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region:

- 175 (2) Cannot transport the plant, or any material or equipment containing that plant, on a public road**
- 177 (1) Cannot sell the plant**
- 177 (2) Cannot sell any produce / goods carrying the plant**
- 182 (2) Landowner must control the plant on their land**
- 185 (1) NRM authority may recover costs for control of weeds on roadsides from adjoining landowners**

## More information

Please contact your local Natural Resources Centre for further information, advice and assistance in controlling Salvation Jane.

### Black Hill

115 Maryvale Road, Athelstone 5076

T: 08 8336 0901

### Gawler

8 Adelaide Road, Gawler South 5118

T: 08 8523 7700

### Willunga

5 Aldinga Road, Willunga 5172

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