



GREY SALLOW WILLOW - A THREAT TO LOCAL WOODLANDS AND WATERWAYS

THE KYNETON WOODLANDS PROJECT

The Grassy Woodlands in the rolling hills north and east of Kyneton in central Victoria are treasured for their picturesque scenery and environmental significance. However, as with other threatened Grassy Woodlands across south eastern Australia, only 20% of this type of vegetation remains in the district.

Most of what remains of this vegetation type has low species diversity, is losing trees as they age and is severely weed infested. If we do nothing to replace them, we could end up with a largely treeless environment.

To address this, the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA), supported by funding from the Australian Government, is assisting landholders to protect, enhance and increase Grassy Woodland habitat over a five year period (2012-2017).

A major emerging threat to creekline woodlands is a willow called Grey Sallow.

THE THREAT FROM GREY SALLOW

Grey Sallow (*Salix cinerea*) is listed as a Weed of National Significance and is targeted for eradication in the North Central region. Because it has no natural 'enemies', it will eventually increase to the point where it posed a major threat to the natural values of waterways right across the cooler parts of Victoria.

Grey Sallow is one of the 'seeding' willows. Initially the spread may appear slow, but when the conditions are right, a mass of seedlings can suddenly emerge. An average sized tree can produce over 300,000 seeds per year; wind can disperse seed up to 15 kilometres away from the parent tree. Recent research also indicates that Grey Sallow can be pollinated by either insects or wind (CSIRO, War on Willows 2011).

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THE IMPACTS OF WILLOWS ON WATERWAYS MAY INCLUDE:

- Out-competing native vegetation
- Elimination of the fauna species that depend on natural creekline habitat
- Detrimental dense shading of streams
- Sediment build up around roots
- Falling leaf litter and subsequent nutrient build up can lead to algal blooms and other issues
- Obstruction and diversion of floods, which can lead to bank erosion



Grey Sallow, catkins & leaves Photos: North Central CMA

REDUCING THE THREAT

Grey Sallow is a Weed of National Significance. To effectively control its spread, the Kyneton Woodlands Project aims to:

Develop awareness and skills in willow identification Map extent of Grey Sallow in the project target area

Eradicate identified Grey Sallow plants

IDENTIFICATION FEATURES

Description: Multi-stemmed shrub or tree to around 10m high but more commonly to 5m high. Wide, rounded crown (much wider than high in mature trees). Bark smooth at first, becoming fissured with age. Leaves ovate, broadest in the middle, tip short and pointed, emerging after the catkins (flower spikes). Appearance variable and can hybridise with other willow species.

Flowers/Seed head: Plants male, female or both. Catkins emerge before the leaves in spring. Male catkins ovate, female catkins cylindric. Sheds lots of seed 4 weeks after flowering.

Distinguishing features: Distinguished by shrubby form. Presence of longitudinal ridges under the bark (may need to peel bark to see ridges). Elliptic to ovate leaves. Branches difficult to break off at the base.

Habitat: Extremely adaptable and can occur in any boggy or intermittently moist area from sea level to above alpine tree level. Most likely to infest areas of bare ground that remains moist for around a month after seed shed (around October/November).

Source: www.weeds.org.au

If you live in the Kyneton Woodlands Project area and think you may have Grey Sallow on your property, please let us know. The North Central CMA would be happy to provide advice, expertise or financial assistance.







FOR MORE INFORMATION

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