PROTECTING OUR BUSHLAND

Grow Me Instead!

A GUIDE FOR GARDENERS ON
THE NEW SOUTH WALES SOUTH COAST

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Cover photo: Banksia spinulosa sp

Introduction

This guide has been produced because many of the plants that have become invasive in Australia have come from gardens. Almost all our national aquatic weeds were imported as ornamentals and many of the worst environmental weeds on the South Coast have escaped from gardens.

To a gardener, a farmer or a botanist the term “weed” may mean very different things, but broadly, a weed is a plant growing where it is not wanted. Weeds reduce productivity of cropping and pasture land, cost farmers and government huge amounts to control and may have negative effects on human and animal health. Environmental weeds cause damage to natural areas and ecosystems.

Around towns much of the land invaded by garden escapes is public land. Local government is poorly funded for weed control so often the task of controlling environmental weeds in these areas falls on volunteers in Bushcare or bush regeneration groups. In many cases this much-needed work just does not happen, and weeds continue to spread.

The purpose of this booklet is to encourage the replacement of weedy garden plants with plants that will not jump the garden fence We aim to empower gardeners to make informed choices about what to plant . By making better choices you can help preserve our native flora and fauna.

It is not possible to cover all of the potentially weedy garden plants in this booklet. This booklet concentrates on weedy plants which may still be available at some nurseries, on charity stalls and at markets, or be swapped by gardening club members.

The booklet covers the NSW South Coast, from Wollongong to the Victorian border. Many of the recommended plants are native to the South Coast. There is a wide range of rainfall and temperature extremes within this area, and many of the plants recommended as replacements will do better in some areas than others. Consult your local nursery or garden centre about which of the recommended plants is most suitable for your particular climate and soil type, or ask them about other non-invasive plants known to perform well in your area.

Many old favourites such as roses, camellias, azaleas and hydrangeas have been in our gardens for a long time and have shown no inclination to escape.

Weed impacts on natural ecosystems

Most Australian flora and fauna is unique to this country. We have a responsibility to preserve the natural character of the Australian landscape, not just in National Parks but around towns and in agricultural landscapes. Many plants and animals, and even whole ecosystems are now under threat of extinction due to human activities.

Native vegetation and the wildlife it supports provides humans with "ecosystem services," many of which cannot be artificially replicated. Vegetation produces oxygen and consumes carbon dioxide. The insects and birds reliant on native bushland provide pest control and pollination of crops and garden plants. Native bushland provides us with pleasant places to relax and unwind from the stresses of modern life.

Loss of habitat due to clearing for agriculture and housing has been the greatest threat to native flora and fauna in the past. For remaining areas of natural vegetation weed invasion is one of the greatest threats, especially close to towns and farms.

Impacts of environmental weeds include:

- crowding out local native plants by competing for water, nutrients and light
- preventing establishment of native plant seedlings by creating heavy shade or a thick layer of plant litter on the ground
- changing the nutrient content of soils, possibly making the soil more hospitable for weeds
- changing the fire regime by making vegetation more or less flammable, dictating what native plants will continue to survive in the changed conditions
- altering the availability of food and shelter for native animals, and improving conditions for introduced species or opportunist natives such as Pied Currawongs and Noisy Miners.

Even well-behaved garden plants can have unforeseen impacts on native animals. Many gardeners like to include nectar-producing plants "for the birds". The provision of an abundant and constant food supply can help large, aggressive birds to increase, often at the expense of other species. For example, Noisy Miners, Bell Miners and Wattlebirds will drive out smaller honeyeaters, and Rainbow Lorikeets take over tree hollows needed for nesting by other birds, possums and bats.

The safest garden plants are those with no particular adaptation to long-distance dispersal. Plants which either do not form viable seed in Australia or with heavy seed which falls straight to the ground are less likely to escape from your garden. Ask nursery staff about seed production and fruit type, and if they don't know, try to find the answer on the web or through your local library before you purchase the plant.

Managing weeds in the Bega Valley

Bega Valley Shire Council is a Local Control Authority under the Biosecurity Act 2015 and is responsible for administering the biosecurity risk from weeds in a shire that covers approximately 6200 square kilometres.

Under the Biosecurity Act 2015, Council has a legal obligation to manage the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by reducing the impacts of Priority Weeds on human health, the economy, community and environment.

The South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan and the Bega Valley Shire Councils Local Weed Management Plan both outline weeds that are considered a Biosecurity Risk.

Section 22 of the Biosecurity Act 2015 states:

"Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised."

Some of the garden plants listed include: Lantana (all species and cultivars), Broom species, Gorse, Boneseed, Prickly Pear, Asparagus and many aquatic plants such as Water Hyacinth, Salvinia and Water Lettuce.

South Coast's least wanted list

The weeds listed below are major environmental weeds in our area. They are unlikely to be sold in nurseries but may be available at fetes or markets. Do not plant them, and if they are already present in your garden please remove them so they do not get a chance to spread further.

Balloon Vine *(Cardiospermum grandiflorum)*

Cape or German Ivy *(Delairea odorata)*

Dolichos Pea or Dunny Vine *(Dipogon lignosus)*

Madeira Vine *(Anredera cordifolia)*

Moth Vine *(Araujia sericifera)*

Privet *(Ligustrum species)*

Tobacco Bush *(Solanum mauritianum)*

Tree of Heaven *(Ailanthus altissima)*

Turkey Rhubarb *(Acetosa sagittata)*

Give the locals a go

This booklet promotes the use of local native plants. More gardeners are realising the advantages of using local species. They are well adapted to local soils and climate, and escaping from your garden is less likely to be an issue (though the use of non-local seed in producing these plants could become an issue for the genetic integrity of local populations).

If you "go local" you will notice that your garden blends into the local environment better, it will be lower maintenance, should require less water and will provide habitat for local wildlife. Food for wildlife does not just include nectar or berries, but insects and seeds, such as those of native grasses.

We have provided a range of suggested alternatives including introduced species ("exotics") and Australian plants. Most of the Australian plants recommended are either native to the South Coast or do not have mechanisms for dispersing their seed widely. Plants from other parts of Australia may become environmental weeds outside their natural distribution and habitat.

Low water use gardening

Many native plants can establish and survive on substantially less water than exotics. However, “low water” does not mean no water. If your native plants wilt and appear stressed at times of low rainfall give them a deep watering. Most native plants will bounce back quickly after moderate dry spells, with little long-term damage. Light to moderate pruning can reduce the water demand during dry periods.

Recommendations of drought resistant exotic species offered in some gardening books should be treated with caution. Droughts are one of the factors which help to limit the number of exotic plants which have succeeded in naturalising in Australia. Planting highly drought tolerant exotics seems a risky response to climate change, which may expose us to even worse weed problems.

How you can make a difference

- Remove any plants identified as weeds in this booklet, South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan and Bega Valley Shire Local Weed Management Plan.
- Do not dump garden waste in the bush or on road and track edges.
- Compost your garden waste at home if possible. If sent to the green waste collection it can become a source of weeds sprouting from the mulch into which this is processed. Weeds often spread around the edges of rubbish tips.
- Prune off spent flowers on potential weeds before they form seed.
- Discuss issues of invasiveness with your local nursery or garden centre staff.
- If you see weedy plants being sold in supermarkets and chain stores, take it up with the manager.
- Join a Bushcare, Landcare or Dunecare group and get hands-on experience and up to date information.
- Use local native plants in your garden as much as possible and try to provide resources for a range of fauna, not just nectar and berry feeders.

African Olive

Olea europaea ssp *cuspidata* (formerly ssp *africana*)

A hardy evergreen small tree which produces masses of round fruits which are smaller than edible olives. Spread by birds. Extremely invasive and has taken over large areas in western Sydney and southern Wollongong. Less common but potentially as invasive on the rest of the South Coast.

European or Edible Olive

Olea europaea ssp europaea

Hardy long-lived evergreen tree. Extremely weedy around Adelaide where it has long been planted for olive production. Worryingly, it is becoming much more widely planted in the eastern States The fruits require a great deal of processing to be edible to humans.

Holly
Ilex aquifolium
Cherry laurel
Prunus laurocerasus
Loquat
Eriobotrya japonica
Hackberry
Celtis chinensis

These are all small trees, the first three evergreen, and Hackberry deciduous, with succulent, bird-dispersed fruits.

A substitute which does not produce such fruits would be preferable. Loquat also acts as a host for fruit fly.

Water Gum
Tristaniopsis laurina

Although quite a large tree in rainforest and along rivers, in cultivation this is usually a small evergreen tree with a dense rounded crown. Mottled smooth bark and yellow flowers in Dec-Jan are attractive features. Native throughout the South Coast and into East Gippsland.

Brown Plum Pine
Podocarpus elatus

Grows to 35 metres in rainforest but much smaller in cultivation, and slow-growing. Evergreen tree with dense, dark green foliage and furrowed bark. Large purple-black fruits with a white bloom are bird-dispersed. It is native north from Nowra.

Bull Magnolia
Magnolia grandiflora

Spreading evergreen tree from southern USA, with open, bowl-sized white flowers in summer, and large leaves with a brown, felted underside. Smaller cultivars more suitable for the home garden are 'Exmouth' which grows to 15 metres and 'Little Gem" (pictured) reaching only 5 metres. Both flower from an early age.

Camphor Laurel

Cinnamomum camphora

A large evergreen tree with a camphor smell to the leaves, fruits and timber. All parts are highly toxic to humans. Small black fruits are spread by birds. Extremely invasive on the NSW North Coast. Invades moist shady areas such as rainforest and river banks on the South Coast.

Coral Tree

Erythrina X sykesii

Popular deciduous tree in coastal areas. Being a sterile hybrid it does not produce seed, but sprouts very readily from dumped branches and logs or even from woodchips.

The smaller Cockspur Coral Tree *(Erythrina crus-galli)* produces seed and can naturalise in wet soils.

Pepper Tree

Schinus areira (or S. molle)

Large evergreen tree with pendulous branches and small pink berries in drooping clusters which are spread by birds. Fruits are toxic to humans and some animals.

The Brazilian Pepper Tree *(Schinus terebinthifolia)* is similar but not pendulous, with coarser leaves and red berries.

Native Figs *Ficus* species

These grow into very large evergreen trees more suited to the farm than the home garden. Moreton Bay Fig *(F. macrophylla)* is the largest and is native north from Nowra. Small-leaved Fig *(F. obliqua)* occurs north from Tathra and Port Jackson or Rusty Fig *(F. rubiginosa)* is native throughout the South Coast. They provide food for birds, flying foxes and possums.

Red Cedar

Toona ciliata (or *T. australis*)

A deciduous rainforest tree to 40 metres with large compound leaves and fissured bark. Flowers and fruits are not very conspicuous but the red new growth in spring is attractive. Fast growing in a wet climate and moderately drought-hardy, but cedar tip moth may be troublesome. It is native north from Milton.

Claret Ash

Fraxinus angustifolia 'Raywood'

A grafted cultivar of the Desert Ash. Compound leaves provide good autumn colour, rich purple in cool climates or yellow in milder areas. Fruits are winged seeds, which may be wind-dispersed, but are seldom produced in large numbers. Avoid the non-grafted Desert Ash, which does not give good autumn colour and has proven weedy in some areas.

Cootamundra Wattle
Acacia baileyana (top)

Queensland Silver Wattle
Acacia podalyriifolia (centre)

West Australian Golden Wattle
Acacia saligna (bottom)

These are the three most commonly planted non-local wattle species to date, and hence also the most common wattle garden escapes.

The first two have attractive silver foliage and produce masses of yellow flowers in late winter. The Golden Wattle has deep yellow, almost orange, flowers. They are fast growing small trees, but short-lived and messy once they begin to age.

In common with many other members of the pea family, wattles have hard-coated seed which is very long-lived in the soil. Huge quantities of seed can build up over the years and germinate after fire or soil disturbance.

An exotic small tree in the pea family with similar invasive capacity is Tree Lucerne or Tagasaste (*Chamaecytisus* or *Cytisus palmensis*), promoted as a source of stock fodder. It has white flowers in spring, and pea-like brown pods.

Sallee Wattle
Acacia floribunda

A small evergreen tree, fast growing but living up to 30 years, rather than the 10-20 years of the three wattles opposite. It has drooping branches and pale yellow flowers in late winter. It is native throughout the South Coast, often found along rivers. Use of local wattles is preferable as all wattles are potentially invasive in time.

Grevillea 'Honey Gem'

There are many hybrid Grevilleas which reach small tree size. Some of them are frost tender. They have an open branching habit, ferny, often grey-green leaves and spectacular clusters of yellow, orange or pink flowers. These provide nectar for birds (but see comment on page 2).

Weeping Bottlebrush
Callistemon salignus

An evergreen tree to about 9 metres with papery bark and a compact crown of weeping branches. Cream or red flowered forms are available. Flowering is in spring but flushes of new young leaves can produce a pink wash over the whole plant at any time of year after rain. A good plant for heavy clay and wet soils but tolerates drier conditions. Native north from Nowra.

Norfolk Island Hibiscus

Lagunaria patersonii

A small evergreen tree with large pink flowers. This species is popular in coastal gardens as it is tolerant of salt and wind. The flowers are followed by a leathery seed capsule with large red-brown seeds, which are spread by birds.

It is sometimes described as an Australian native plant with a distribution which includes Norfolk Island and Queensland. However it is not clear whether it is naturally occurring in Queensland or an early introduction there.

In NSW it often escapes gardens into swampy areas, where it can grow in deep shade under native she-oaks and other species tolerant of waterlogged soils.

Coast Teatree, often planted for dune stabilisation and spreading beyond its natural distribution on the South Coast.

The suggested substitute plants are locally native evergreen trees tolerant of salt exposure in coastal situations.

Some local native plants of this habitat have shown weed potential and should be avoided. Coast Teatree *(Leptospermum laevigatum)* and Coast Wattle *(Acacia sophorae)* have been gradually spreading beyond their natural distribution and habitat, with our help.

Coastal Banksia

Banksia integrifolia ssp integrifolia

A common plant of coastal sand dunes, native to the east coast from Victoria to Queensland. Leaves are leathery and grey-green with a white underside. Pale yellow bottlebrush type flowers are a valuable seasonal source of nectar for mammals and birds, particularly migrating honeyeaters.

Saw or Old Man Banksia

Banksia serrata

Not quite as salt tolerant as Coast Banksia, this gnarled, rough-barked tree often occurs on the more sheltered hind-dune. Leaves are coarsely toothed and flowers are similar to Coastal Banksia but in larger heads.

It flowers in late summer to early winter, providing food for flocks of honeyeaters as they pass through on their annual north-south migration.

Pointed Boobialla

Myoporum acuminatum

A tree to about 10 metres with glossy narrow leaves and pale corky bark. Small flowers are white or pale mauve with spots in the throat. Highly salt tolerant, it often grows just behind mangroves on the shoreline, but also as a rainforest tree further inland. It is native north from the Bega area.

Radiata or Monterey Pine

Pinus radiata

This large evergreen tree has been very widely planted in Australia as a windbreak and timber tree. The winged seeds are contained in woody cones, from which they are released when ripe to spread on the wind.

It is possible that cockatoos, which eat the seeds, may sometimes carry the cones longer distances than they could travel on the wind, as plants can sometimes be found in bush many kilometres from the nearest plantation.

Self-sown young trees are a very common sight near mature trees, as in the example at left.

Other pine species may also be as invasive, although

Stone Pine *(Pinus pinea)* seems less so.

Few other exotic conifers are as invasive as the pines, although Arizona Cypress *(Cupressus arizonica*, at left) and other cypress species sometimes self-sow close to mature trees.

Black She-oak

Allocasuarina littoralis

She-oaks have fine branchlets similar to pine needles, and they make a similar sighing sound in the wind. Individual flowers are inconspicuous and male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The male trees turn rusty brown when in flower. Female trees develop small woody “cones.” Black She-oak is the best of the locally native she-oaks, growing to about 10 metres.

Port Jackson Pine

Callitris rhomboidea

Port Jackson Pine has a patchy occurrence on the South Coast, often growing on rocky sites. It is one of few native conifers in NSW. It is slow growing to 15 metres. Lower branches are retained almost to the ground. Dark foliage produces a sombre effect. *Callitris* species do naturalise readily so it is best to stick to the locally native species.

Various exotic conifers

There are many introduced conifers which come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and foliage colours. Other than the pines, none have shown an inclination to escape from cultivation on the South Coast. The Leylandii hybrid cypresses, often promoted as a very fast growing screen plant, are too large for the home garden and have begun to naturalise in the Blue Mountains.

Cocos or Queen Palm

Arecastrum romanzoffianum (Syagrus romanzoffiana or Cocos plumosa)

This very commonly planted palm produces large bunches of yellow fleshy fruits which are spread by large birds and probably by fruit bats. It has begun to appear in bush around Sydney and will doubtless become more widely naturalised.

Canary Island Date Palm

Phoenix canariensis

This palm has been in cultivation for longer than the Cocos Palm, but has not been planted in such large numbers. Occasional seedling plants occur in wet areas on the South Coast.

Almost all palms have bird-dispersed seed and could naturalise, particularly in wet areas.

New Zealand Cabbage Palm

Cordyline australis

Not a true palm, this very popular garden plant has a similar “pom-pom on a stick” form and grows to about 7 metres, often branching to form several heads.

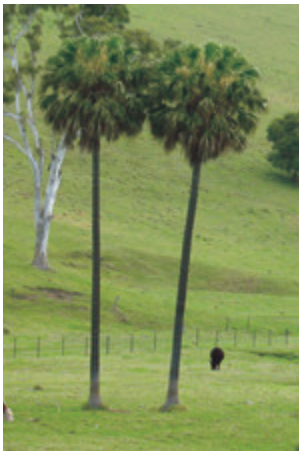
It produces large sprays of small fleshy fruits and has begun to appear in South Coast swamps.

Bangalow Palm

Archontophoenix cunninghamiana

This is the South Coast native species most similar in appearance to Cocos Palm, with long drooping fronds on a smooth trunk. It is found north from Batemans Bay.

Like many palms, its natural habitat is wet gullies and rainforest, but it will tolerate drier conditions.



Cabbage Palm

Livistona australis

This native palm has fan-shaped leaves and generally a smooth trunk, although old leaf bases are retained on young plants.

It is native throughout the South Coast and into East Gippsland. Remnant trees, sometimes as much as 30 metres high, can often be seen in gullies in cleared paddocks on the coast. It is moderately salt-tolerant.

Giant Bird of Paradise

Strelitzia nicolai

This is not a palm, but a relative of the banana from southern Africa. It provides a similar tropical appearance in the garden to the palms. It grows to 9 metres high, with leaves up to 2 metres long and large whiteish flowers.Old plants may develop a bare trunk like a palm, but often it is leafy to ground level.

Box Elder

Acer negundo

Widely planted as a fast growing deciduous tree, this species has winged paired seeds which fly like small helicopters in the wind. It is particularly likely to become established along rivers, but is capable of growing in dry conditions too. Variegated leaf forms can produce seed, and may also be invasive.

White and Lombardy Poplars

Populus alba, P. nigra 'Italica'

These two poplars sucker profusely from the roots and form dense thickets. They can be as damaging in river beds as willows, blocking flow and causing erosion by trapping debris and deflecting water against the banks. They spread vegetatively, when broken branches take root on wet soil.

Alders

Alnus species

The alders are adapted to growing in wet areas, and spread by wind or water-borne seed. Some have become popular in recent years, particularly *Alnus jorullensis* (pictured), and have already become established from seed around lake edges in Canberra. They perform poorly in dry conditions and are best avoided.

Maples

Acer species

There are many better species of maples than Box Elder. None of them appear to be invasive on the South Coast, although some escape occasionally in colder climates, such as the Blue Mountains. Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) is a small tree which comes in a huge variety of leaf forms and colours. It requires quite a lot of water to perform well.

Crepe Myrtle

Lagerstroemia indica

This deciduous small tree from Asia produces large sprays of pink, red or mauve flowers in late summer. It gives good autumn colour (yellow to orange) in cool climates and has lovely streaky smooth bark.

It is often multi-trunked. Its only drawback is a tendency to develop mildew on the leaves in humid weather.

Magnolias

Magnolia species

There are numerous species and cultivars of deciduous magnolias, most of which come from Asia. All bear large striking white, pink or purple flowers in early spring, mostly before the leaves emerge.

Despite a lush appearance they are relatively drought tolerant.

Cotoneaster
Cotoneaster species

Very commonly planted, largely for the profusion of red to orange berries which hang on the branches for months after flowering, the cotoneasters are widespread weeds in bushland and farming land. They are spread by birds. Prostrate forms sold as groundcovers or rockery plants less commonly escape, but may do so.

Firethorn and Hawthorn
Pyracantha and Crataegus species

These two types of spiny shrubs or small trees produce large crops of small bright red or orange fruits which are part of their appeal to gardeners.

However, the fruits are widely spread by birds and both groups of plants are common weeds. *Pyracantha angustifolia* (pictured) is the most commonly grown species.

Himalayan Honeysuckle
Leycesteria formosa

Red cestrum
Cestrum elegans

Oregon Grape
Mahonia species

Common Elder
Sambucus nigra

These are all shrubs with fleshy fruits which are dispersed by birds. Himalayan Honeysuckle has proven very invasive in cool mountain climates in NSW and Victoria.

The other three species are not widely planted, nor widely established as weeds yet. All are best avoided.

NSW Christmas Bush

Ceratopetalum gummiferum

An evergreen shrub or small tree with a bushy habit in cultivation. Sprays of small white flowers are short-lived but when they fall the red bracts which enclose the flowers persist and form a colourful display for several weeks. Although it prefers semi-shade and moist soil it will tolerate harsher conditions.

NZ Christmas Bush

Metrosideros Cv. Thomasii

A densely foliaged shrub or small tree with large sprays of orange-red flowers in late summer. Leaves are dark green and leathery with a white bloom on the new growth. Tolerant of wind and salt.

Port Wine Magnolia

Michelia figo

Dense tall shrub with glossy bright green leaves. Small purple-brown flowers are produced in spring. They are not very showy but produce a strong perfume said to be like port wine, but rather more like synthetic banana syrup. An occasional waft is pleasant but don't plant it close to windows or it will be overpowering.

Cassia

Senna species

Several species of Cassia are among the most widespread bushland weeds of the South Coast. Showy yellow flowers are followed by bean-like hanging pods with several hard-coated seeds. These are spread when soil is moved, in water and occasionally by birds.

Polygala, Butterfly Bush

Polygala species

Polygala myrtifolia (pictured) and P. virgata are the two widely naturalised species of this group. They are often mistaken for peas, but the purple flowers lack the large “standard” petal typical of peas (see photo below) and the side petals are fringed. Both are very invasive especially in coastal bush.

African Scurfpea

Psoralea pinnata

The fine foliage of this tall shrub looks a little like pine needles, but close inspection will show that the leaves are composed of three narrow leaflets. Like Cassia, it is a member of the pea family, with hard-coated, long-lived seed. It is often grown in coastal situations and invades dunes and forest.

Golden Honey-myrtle

Melaleuca bracteata 'Revolution Gold'

This is a small tree which provides a permanent yellow accent in the garden. The bark is fissured, the branches somewhat drooping and the new growth bright yellow.

It could be teamed with the lower-growing 'Golden Gem' cultivar or yellow-foliaged Diosma, as in the garden at left.

Crowea

Crowea exalata and cultivars

Pink star-like flowers to about 2cm across are carried in profusion in summer and autumn on this shrub. Not as tall as Polygala, the height varies from 15cm to one metre depending on the cultivar.

It is drought hardy and some forms are salt tolerant. It is a native of the South Coast, scattered in rocky areas and coastal heath.

Ceanothus, Californian Lilac

Ceanothus species and hybrids

These shrubs come from North America. They are evergreen and drought-tolerant. Small blue or purple flowers in dense clusters are carried in great profusion. Flowering time varies between spring and late summer. They are fast-growing but may be short-lived.

Cape or Crested Wattle

Paraserianthes lophantha
(or Albizia lophantha)

This is a tall shrub in the pea family, with feathery bipinnate leaves (twice-divided into many small leaflets), yellow-green bottlebrush-like flower clusters and brown seed pods. It has long-lived seed which may germinate profusely after disturbance. It is a common South Coast weed, originally from Western Australia.

Ochna or Mickey Mouse Plant

Ochna serrulata

Ochna has yellow flowers and fleshy black fruits. It is spread by birds, and is a fairly common weed in shady moist bush on the South Coast, and even more common further north. It is a very tough plant with a long tap root, and even small seedlings are almost impossible to pull out, so it can be a difficult weed to deal with.

Lion's Tail

Leonotis leonurus

A large herbaceous (non-woody) plant to about 1.2 metres high, popular for its striking orange flowers. It is not clear how this plant spreads. Seed on dumped material may be responsible for its initial spread into bushland and sand dunes.

Native Fuschia

Correa species and cultivars

There are many attractive species and cultivars of the native Correas. Most tolerate drought and poor soils, although some of the larger species such as *Correa lawrenceana* typically grow in moist situations. Several species grow on the South Coast.

All have bell-shaped flowers which attract honeyeaters.

Pincushion Bush

Leucospermum species

Several species and hybrids of these dramatic shrubs from southern Africa are available. They have flowers similar to the native Waratah, in shades of yellow, orange or red, which are produced in spring.

Leaves are generally thick and leathery. Prune spent flowers to keep the bush compact.

Conebushes

Leucadendron species

Closely related to the preceding group and also from southern Africa, these are hardy plants. However, both groups require well-drained soil, full sun and good air circulation. The clusters of small flowers are surrounded by colourful bracts in yellow, cream and red shades. They are valued as cut flowers because of their long vase-life and striking appearance.

Mirror Bush

Coprosma repens

This evergreen shrub from New Zealand with round, glossy leaves is very commonly planted in seaside gardens because of its salt tolerance. Its succulent fruits are spread by birds into many coastal vegetation types, including swamp forest, dunes, and sea-cliff scrub.

Indian Hawthorn

Raphiolepis indica, R. umbellata

Compact, dark-foliaged shrubs with dark blue-black fruits, which are salt tolerant. Less commonly used than Mirror Bush, they are less frequently seen as a weed. However, birds do spread the seed into bushland.

R. indica (illustrated at left) has slightly toothed leaves, and *R. umbellata* (below left) smooth-edged leaves.

Native Rosemary
Westringia fruticosa

They don't come more salt tolerant than this one. It is common on coastal cliffs throughout the South Coast. It has a compact form and can be pruned into a hedge. Various cultivars have been produced, including a variegated-foliaged form.

Boobialla
Myoporum boninense

Succulent bright green leaves make this an attractive plant even without the small white flowers and purple berries it carries for much of the year. The very similar *Myoporum insulare* is native around the southern coast of Australia and is replaced by *M. boninense* north from Eden. The New Zealand native, *M. laetum* may also be sold as boobialla, but should be avoided as it is likely to be spread by birds.

White Correa
Correa alba

Another very salt tolerant shrub to about a metre in height (though it may be taller in cultivation), which is scattered on sea cliffs and dunes throughout the South Coast. The main flowering period is winter, but it may flower at other times.

Japanese Honeysuckle
Lonicera japonica

The sweetly scented cream and yellow flowers make this a popular vine, but its black berries are spread by birds.

It is particularly invasive in wet areas such as riverbanks and gullies, and its rampant growth can smother trees, shrubs and groundcover plants.

English Ivy
Hedera helix

This rampant climber clings to walls, fences and trees with small suckers on the stems. It also forms a solid mat over the ground. Only stems which are growing in sunlight will fruit, but they produce huge quantities of black berries. These are spread by birds.

It can kill trees and smother groundcover.

Bluebell Creeper
Sollya heterophylla

Coming from Western Australia, this plant has been promoted as a native. However, it is showing invasive potential in the eastern states. In Victoria it has become quite weedy around Melbourne, and occasional plants in coastal bush suggest it has this potential on the South Coast too. It scrambles over the top of shrubs and small trees.

Wonga Vine
Pandorea pandorana

This is a robust vine which can cover quite a lot of fence or trellis in good soil, though it is generally straggly in drier forest. The form growing naturally on the South Coast has cream flowers with brown and purple flecks, but there are yellow and white flowered cultivars also available.

The seed is winged and spread by wind.

Native Sarsaparilla
Hardenbergia violacea

The wild form of this purple-flowered pea is a prostrate spreading plant or a small climber. It is widespread in forest, woodland and dune scrub on the South Coast. There are also various cultivars, notably 'Happy Wanderer' which has a bushier form, and white-flowered cultivars.

Chinese Star Jasmine
Trachelospermum jasminoides

This evergreen vine from China has dark, glossy foliage and spicy nutmeg-scented flowers in summer. It is slow-growing initially but vigorous.

It produces sticky white sap, making it unpleasant to prune, so give it plenty of room. Variegated leaf forms are also available.

Climbing Groundsel

Senecio angulatus (at left)
S. tamoides

These are succulent-leaved climbers with yellow daisy flowers. Those of Senecio tamoides are showier. They sprawl over the ground and climb high into trees. Both are salt tolerant.

Seed dispersal is by wind, and dumping may help their spread by vegetative means.

Black-eyed Susan

Thunbergia alata

The soft green foliage and striking orange and black flowers make this a popular choice for a small vine in a shaded situation. However, it frequently escapes from the garden, sometimes assisted by dumping. It can smother shrubs and groundcover in moist bushland.

Morning Glory and Mile-a-Minute

Ipomoea indica, I. cairica

These two vines are very invasive in coastal bush. They are highly salt tolerant and will grow on sea cliffs and even islands. They can smother everything, from the ground to the treetops.

They do not produce seed in cool climates, but this scarcely slows their spread as they are such rampant growers.

Gum Vine

Aphanopetalum resinosum

This is a widely distributed vine on the South Coast, occurring in rainforest and wetter eucalypt forests. It can also tolerate quite a high level of sun and wind exposure. It is very vigorous.

The cream flowers are four-petalled and produced in spring.

Snake Vine

Hibbertia scandens

Typically a small climber or groundcover in its natural habitat, it may be more vigorous in the garden, given better soil and more water than it receives in the bush.

The yellow flowers are about 5cm across and carried for most of the year.

Running Postman

Kennedia rubicunda

A hardy, salt-tolerant twiner with red flowers, usually seen straggling through the undergrowth in forest and on coastal dunes. It can be used as a groundcover too, but it will climb if there is anything nearby to twine up into.

The smaller Kennedia prostrata makes a good groundcover and is also highly salt-tolerant.

Grafted Black Passionfruit

Passiflora edulis (grafted forms)

It is very common for grafted forms of the edible black passionfruit to sucker from the rootstock, which may be:

Blue Passionflower
P. caerulea, (illustrated at left)

or

White Passionflower
P. subpeltata (below left).

If these then replace the less vigorous edible passionfruit they will produce fruit, which is consumed by birds and the seed spread into moist forest. Both are smothering vines.

Banana Passionfruit

Passiflora mollissima (or P. tarminiana)

A rampant vine more popular for its large pink flowers than the oblong, yellow fruits. These do produce a little edible pulp, but it is less tasty than the Black Passionfruit. However, birds will consume the fruits and spread the seed, particularly in moist, sunny forest such as on gully edges.

Black Passionfruit

Passiflora edulis
(seedling forms)

Seedling grown Black Passionfruit produce perfectly acceptable fruits and do not have the suckering problems of the grafted forms. Fruits are consumed by birds and spread into bush to some extent, but in the shade it is a straggly vine which does little harm to native vegetation and rarely fruits. But don't grow it unless you intend to eat the fruit.

The same comment applies to all vines, trees and shrubs grown for their edible fruits. Citrus fruits do not appear to naturalise, but most other types can be found scattered on road verges and occasionally in forest.

Types with small fruits which are more easily consumed by birds are the most likely to spread.

Grape

Vitis vinifera

Grapes are very seldom seen in the bush. To make sure, seedless varieties could be grown. Avoid the very vigorous Concorde and Isabella varieties, whose musky, thick-skinned fruit is an acquired taste.

Vines need pruning in winter and may need to be sprayed for mildew in humid summers.

Asparagus "Ferns"

Asparagus species (formerly *Protasparagus*)

There are several species of these plants which are not in fact ferns, but have fine feathery fern-like foliage.

Some are groundcovers and some climb. *Asparagus densiflorus* (at left) has red berries and *A. plumosus* has blue-black berries.

The climbing *Asparagus scandens* (below left) has orange berries. These plants have been popular groundcover and hanging basket plants for a shady site, and are now among our worst coastal weeds in moist forest, on sand dunes and in gullies.

Fishbone Fern

Nephrolepis cordifolia

This true fern comes from Queensland and the NSW North Coast, but naturalises fairly readily on the South Coast, usually in moist shady sites. It may creep out of gardens by vegetative spread from underground runners, or in very moist sites such as along creeks it could spread by wind-blown spores.

There are numerous local ferns which are just as attractive.

Prostrate Grevillea species

Grevillea species and cultivars

As groundcovers there are several prostrate or low mound-forming Grevilleas, some of which even have similar foliage to the Asparagus "Ferns," though they will not tolerate such shady conditions. *Grevillea obtusifolia* 'Gingin Gem' is illustrated. Grevillea *juniperina 'Molonglo'* is another example, with yellow to apricot flowers.

Photo: Lorna Rose

Mother Spleenwort

Asplenium bulbiferum

This is a true fern with erect to drooping branching fronds up to 1m long, ideal for a hanging basket.

In its natural habitat it grows on the ground or on rocks, trees or treefern trunks in rainforest. It will tolerate deep shade.

It is native to the South Coast, though uncommon here.

Prickly Rasp Fern

Doodia aspera

This pretty little fern is thought to be the source of the place name Redfern, as its new growth is a bright pinky-orange. It makes a good groundcover for a shady site, but will also tolerate full sun and is one of the most drought-tolerant local native ferns. The Sickle Fern (Pellaea falcata) is another good groundcover. Both spread by underground runners.

Invasive bulbs

Many bulbs are highly invasive on the South Coast and more are invasive in the more Mediterranean climate of Victoria and south-west WA.

Some of the worst in our area are Montbretia *(Crocosmia crocosmiiflora*, at left), Bulbil Watsonia *(Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*, below left), Tall Watsonia *(Watsonia borbonica,* below) and Formosan Lily (*Lilium formosanum*, bottom left).

Additional but less common weedy bulbs are Lined Tritonia *(Tritonia lineata)*, Freesia (*Freesia* species and hybrids), *Aristea ecklonis* and *Gladiolus* species and hybrids.

Two groups of bulbous plants, Oxalis (all non-native species) and *Romulea* (all species except for the widespread weed *Romulea rosea*) are now listed as noxious in NSW and cannot be sold.

Blue Flax-lily

Dianella species

The most common of the four local native species is Dianella caerulea, sold as Paroo Lily. A more attractive species is

D. revoluta, which has purplish leaf bases.

D. tasmanica is a much larger plant. All have arching sprays of small blue flowers followed by purple berries, and are spread by underground runners as well as from seed.

Purple Flag

Patersonia species

There are four species of Patersonia which occur naturally on the South Coast.

Three, *P. glabrata*, *P. sericea* and *P. longifolia*, favour dry sandy soils, while the much larger *P. fragilis* grows in poorly drained soils. All form small tussocks of strap-like foliage with short-lived but showy purple flowers.

White Native Iris

Libertia paniculata

Libertia grows naturally in gullies within forest, and prefers at least partial shade and moist soils.

It has grassy leaves and sprays of small white flowers in spring.

Another attractive native iris with larger white flowers is *Diplarrena moraea*, which grows in cool forests in the coastal ranges.

Ginger Lily

Hedychium gardnerianum

This tall herbaceous plant is popular for a shady corner, but has the disadvantage of spreading rapidly within the garden by underground runners and being difficult to dig out. The bright orange fruits are spread by birds and it can be weedy in moist shady areas such as gullies.

Arum or Calla Lily

Zantedeschia aethiopicum

This is not the true Arum Lily (*Arum italicum*) but is the more commonly planted of the two similar plants.

It is extremely invasive in wet areas where it can form dense stands that exclude all other plants. Birds spread the seeds, and once established, the plant can also spread from rhizomes. The sap is toxic. Some hybrids may be similarly invasive.

Canna or Indian Shot

Canna X generalis hybrids and Canna indica

Canna is not invasive on the far south coast, as winter frosts kill it back to ground level. In warmer parts of the region it can form dense stands, often in wet areas. It spreads by runners and seed.

Another very popular weedy plant of similar habit is Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis*).

Gymea Lily

Doryanthes excelsa

This dramatic accent plant is native from the Illawarra north. It may take up to seven years to first flowering and does not produce its tall spikes of red flowers every year, but when it does they are well worth the wait.

It thrives in poor sandy soils and full sun or partial shade. A good rockery plant.

Photo: Jedda Lemmon

Swamp Lily

Crinum pedunculatum

Swamp Lily is native to the South Coast, north from Ulladulla. In the wild it grows in wet and saline areas such as the margins of coastal lakes and on creek banks. It needs moist soil in full sun or part shade.

The large heads of white flowers are similar in form to Agapanthus, but with fewer flowers. The leaves are broad and sword-shaped.

Bird of Paradise

Strelitzia reginae

This very popular plant from South Africa can be found in almost every coastal garden, and shows no sign of becoming invasive, though it may occasionally escape further north.

The large tussocky clumps of grey-green spoon-shaped leaves are topped by dramatic orange and blue flowers, present for much of the year.

South African Daisy
Osteospermum ecklonis

This sprawling groundcover plant has become more popular in recent years and is increasingly appearing in bushland and along the landward side of beaches on the South Coast. There are pink and white "petalled" forms. Seed is wind-dispersed. Some spread is possibly caused by dumping.

Gazania or Treasure Flower
Gazania species

Gazania species and hybrids are tough mat-forming daisies popular for a dry area. They are invasive on beaches and on road edges.

Coreopsis
Coreopsis lanceolata

Coreopsis can be very common on road edges in areas with sandy soils but seldom penetrates far into undisturbed bush.

Seaside Daisy
Erigeron karvinskianus

Another tough groundcover plant which has become popular in the last decade or so, and is increasing in bushland. Fine wind-blown seed can travel a long distance from the parent plant, and this species can become established on the harshest sites, such as roadside cuttings or cliffs.

Fan-flowers

Scaevola species and cultivars

An attractive local native species is *Scaevola aemula*. There are numerous cultivars (illustrated) and some species which are not native to the South Coast available from nurseries. Their potential for spreading beyond the confines of the garden is low. Flowers are generally purple, but some are white. Most form a small mat.

Prostrate Guinea Flower

Hibbertia diffusa

Another small mat-forming plant to about 1m across, with yellow flowers, native to the South Coast. It usually grows in forest and prefers some shade. It is quite drought-tolerant.

Other prostrate species are *Hibbertia pedunculata*, *H. procumbens* and *H. serpyllifolia*. All require good drainage.

Paper Daisy cultivars

Xerochrysum bracteatum (formerly Helichrysum or Bracteantha bracteata)

This species of paper daisy is a tall annual or biennial herb to about 1.2m, with yellow flowers in its natural form. However there are numerous cultivars with a range of flower colours and growth habits. Best treated as an annual but may self-seed.

Periwinkle
Vinca major

An old groundcover plant which is not so often seen in the modern garden, but is now well established in wet areas such as river banks.

It does not produce seed in Australia, but spreads by runners and by fragments carried in water or in relocated soil. It forms dense mats suppressing all other plants. A variegated form may also be invasive.

Spider Plant or Ribbon Grass
Chlorophytum comosum

This grass-like plant from southern Africa can spread by seed but most often spreads by forming new plantlets at the tips of the flowering stems. These take root when they contact the soil.

It comes in a green and a variegated form, both weedy. It is often spread by dumping.

Wandering Jew
Tradescantia fluminensis (formerly T. albiflora)

A rampant groundcover which is often planted in deep shade, but will also grow in sun. It is most often weedy in moist areas such as river banks, partly because it does not produce seed in Australia, but like Periwinkle, relies on flooding to relocate plant fragments.

Creeping Boobialla

Myoporum parvifolium

A prostrate plant with stems about 1m long and small white flowers with purple spotting. It prefers well-drained soils and a sunny position and will tolerate salinity. It is not native to the South Coast, being found in NSW only in the far west, but it is unlikely to spread beyond the garden.

Mat-rushes

Lomandra species and cultivars

Spiny Mat-rush *(Lomandra longifolia)* is a common South Coast native which has become popular in situations such as median strips. There are several smaller and more attractive local species available, such as the grey-foliaged *Lomandra confertifolia* ssp *rubiginosa* 'Seascape' illustrated and *Lomandra confertifolia* 'Little Con'.

Scurvy Weed

Commelina cyanea

This blue-flowered local native is sometimes confused with Wandering Jew as the leaves are a little similar. In sunny conditions it can form a dense mat but it is straggly in the shade. Plants are burned off by frost if grown in the open, but will recover in spring.

The related *Pollia crispata*, similar but larger, with white flowers, would be a better choice in deep shade.

Stonecrop

Crassula multicava

A succulent groundcover which forms dense mats in sun or partial shade. It does not usually form seed in Australia, but spreads from dumped plants. Detached fragments of the plant will take root. Commonly seen naturalised on sea cliffs and other rocky sites.

Mother-of-Millions

Bryophyllum species and hybrids

The initial infestation of this succulent is often by dumping, but as each leaf produces several small plantlets at the tip which drop off and take root, it can spread rapidly and is difficult to kill. It forms dense smothering mats.

Aloes

Aloe species (particularly *Aloe saponifera*)

Many species of succulents naturalise freely and Aloe saponifera is one of the most common. It spreads by underground runners and can become dominant in the groundcover of open sunny forest and woodland.Succulents in general should be treated with some suspicion. They are very drought-hardy and could become invasive.

Native Pigface

Carpobrotus glaucescens

Native Pigface is common on beach dunes and coastal cliffs. It is highly drought and salt-tolerant. The similar South African *Carpobrotus edulis* has yellow flowers and the South American *C. aequilaterus* pink flowers. Both can become weedy on beaches and should be avoided. The native species can be distinguished by the base of the pink "petals" being white.

Cockspur Flower

Plectranthus graveolens

This local native species has an erect form and grows around rock outcrops. The leaves are not succulent but are quite thick, and grey-green with a dense coating of short hairs. Small blue flowers are carried in terminal spikes. It is very hardy and easy to propagate from cuttings.

A cultivar called 'Blue Spires' has white-edged leaves.

Perennial Pinks

Dianthus X allwoodii

This perennial mat-forming hybrid cultivar is long-lived, with dense silver foliage and flowers in shades of pink and white held above the foliage in spring and summer. It is not a succulent, but is drought-hardy. Pinks, and the closely related carnations, come from Europe.

Ornamental Grasses and Sedges

Grasses are appearing in nurseries in ever-increasing numbers. Many have the advantage of being drought-tolerant and most of those being promoted have either interesting foliage colour (blue, variegated), dramatic seed heads or provide an interesting structural element in the garden.

However, many grasses have adaptations for spreading their seed widely, with plumes to help catch the breeze, or hooks or sharp points to attach to clothing or animal hair. It would pay to be wary of using non-native grasses in the garden as some have a high potential for escaping and becoming weeds. Sedges are slightly less likely to spread, but there are many attractive local native grasses and sedges that would do just as well as the exotics.

Fountain Grass
Pennisetum setaceum

Pennisetum advena 'Rubrum', a similar exotic

Golden Bamboo, Black Bamboo

Phyllostachys aurea, P. nigra

Beware of running bamboos, which can take over large areas and require a backhoe to remove the huge root mat. They do not seed, but can be spread by dumping.

Use only clumping bamboos, which are much less vigorous, such as *Bambusa multiplex* 'Alphonse Karr' or other small cultivars.

Kangaroo Grass

Themeda australis (also known as *T. triandra*)

There are several South Coast native grasses that form large tussocks with attractive seed heads. Kangaroo grass has both a tall and a compact form, the latter found naturally on sea cliffs.

Other species which could be used include poa tussocks (*Poa labillardieri*, illustrated at left, and *Poa poiformis*), Tall Bamboo Grass (*Austrostipa ramosissima*) and Curly Wallaby Grass (*Notodanthonia longifolia*).

Knobby Club-rush

Isolepis nodosa

There are many locally native sedges, some preferring wet areas and some highly drought-tolerant. *Isolepis nodosa* grows naturally on beaches and around coastal swamps on sand, but will grow in most soil types.

Another attractive South Coast species sometimes found in nurseries is the feathery-foliaged *Baloskion* (formerly *Restio*) *tetraphyllum*.

Parrot's Feather

Myriophyllum aquaticum

Introduced water plants are a potential disaster for our waterways. They can be spread by dumping, or water birds may spread seed or plant fragments into natural wetlands from outdoor ponds and dams. Parrot's Feather is from South America. It looks similar to many native species but is more robust and more blue-green in colour. It floats in the water or sprawls over mud when water levels fall.

Leafy Elodea

Egeria densa

Confusion may arise with the species below but *Egeria densa* has leaves in whorls of 4 or 5 and showy white flowers which sit on the water surface.

Canadian Pondweed

Elodea canadensis

This species has leaves in whorls of 3 and inconspicuous flowers. It floats in the water, not on the surface.

It is occasionally found in South Coast waterways. Like most water plants it is most likely to become a problem in shallow, still, nutrient-enriched water bodies.

Native Water-milfoils

Myriophyllum species

There are many species of native Water-milfoils, some of which look quite similar to Parrot's Feather.

They would perform just as well in fish tanks and ornamental ponds, without placing our natural wetlands at risk.

Three species occur on the South Coast, the most common being *Myriophyllum variifolium.*

Native Water Lilies

Nymphoides species

These delicate small yellow-flowered Water Lilies or Marshworts are more subtle than the large-flowered, mostly exotic water lilies commonly grown on dams and ponds, but they make an attractive feature in an ornamental pond.

N. geminata and *N. montana* are native to the Southern Tablelands, but not to the South Coast.

Frogsmouth

Philydrum lanuginosum

This is an erect plant to around a metre in height, growing in shallow water and around the edges of ponds.

The flowering stems carry a spike of large yellow flowers in summer. The leaves are strap-like and spongy, and held in a fan-like clump.

Contacts and Resources

For a list of priority weeds throughout NSW South East Region
The South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
https://southeast.lls.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weed-control

Bega Valley Shire Council Local Weed Management Plan
www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds

For more information about non-invasive alternatives:
www.floraforfauna.com.au/

Books:

Blood, Kate – Environmental Weeds,
A field guide for SE Australia Pub. CH Jerram, 2000

Muyt, Adam – Bush Invaders of South-East Australia.
Pub. RG & FJ Richardson, 2001

Richardson, RG & FJ – Weeds of the South-East.
An Identification Guide for Australia.
Pub. RG & FJ Richardson 2006.

Council contacts:

Bega Valley Shire Council
Biosecurity Officers 02 6499 2222

Visit: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds

Back cover photo Leptospernum rotundifolium

Biosecurity and purchasing property

The purchase of rural land is a major decision and the presence of Biosecurity Matter (Weeds), and the continuing cost of managing weed infestations, is often either not considered or forgotten. This is especially the case as people make the "sea or tree change" with little or no experience in rural land management.

Before signing a contract, prospective purchasers should carefully consider the following:

- Are there biosecurity risks (weed infestations) on the land?
- Are weed infestations being managed?
- What are the costs of the continual weed control?
- If the land is to be used for farming, will weed infestations lead to production losses?

Privacy laws prevent Council from disclosing weed infestation information to prospective buyers without the owner's consent, however by asking these questions, purchasers can be more informed before signing on the dotted line.

What should I do before purchase?

Arrange for someone who knows about weeds to inspect the property with you. If weeds are found, a weed spraying contractor can provide an estimate of how much control work will cost. Council does not provide information on such costs, however there are a number of weed spraying contractors in the Shire who can be found in the yellow pages.

The small cost of an independent inspection will assist you in making an informed decision regarding the land in question.

Bega Valley Shire Local Weed Management Plan

This plan identifies the priority weeds that both Council and land managers must maintain within the Bega Valley Shire.

- **Prohibited Matter**
- **Mandatory measures**
- **General Biosecurity duty** (under the Biosecurity Act 2015)
- **South Easte Regional Strategic Weed Mangement plan**
- **Priority Weeds within the Bega Valley Shire**

Visit www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds

www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds

NSW WeedWise

NSW WeedWise contains over 300 weed profiles, describing:

- **Profile**
- **Control** (including registered herbicide options)
- **Biosecurity duty** (under the Biosecurity Act 2015)

Dowload on the App Store or get it on Google Play

Visit weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

My Notes

My Notes

bega valley shire council

More questions?

Please contact
your local Biosecurity Officer at
Bega Valley Shire Council
02 6499 2222

www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/weeds