Scientific Name: *Alhagi maurorum* Common name: Camel thorn

QUESTION	COMMENTS	REFERENCE	RANKING
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	Erect perennial shrub 40 to 100 cm high with rigid, much branched stems bearing numerous sharp spines 1.0 to 2.5 cm long. The spines can puncture human skin and break off in the wound. Dense infestations would restrict human access.	P & C (2001) Geoff Tyers[1] pers coms	**MH**
2. Reduce tourism?	The size and spiny nature of the plant may reduce some recreational activities.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
3. Injurious to people?	Woody stems remain after the plant dies back in autumn. Spines present for most of the year. The spines can break off in the skin.	P & C (2001) Geoff Tyers CDFA[2]	**H**
4. Damage to cultural sites?	The plant has an extensive and vigorous root system. In north-western Victoria "…shoots regularly break through a sealed bitumen road and the roots have extended the patch by a distance of about 6 metres." It has the potential to cause serious structural damage to cultural sites.	P & C (2001)	**H**
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
6. Impact water quality?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
7. Increase soil erosion?	The aerial parts of the plant die back in autumn leaving the soil surface exposed in dense infestations. The extensive and deep root system (2 m deep and 8 m laterally), provide good soil stability. Potential for low probability of large scale soil movement.	P & C (2001)	**L**
8. Reduce biomass?	In Australia, it is found in pastures and neglected areas. Likely to replace existing biomass.	P & C (2001)	**ML**
9. Change fire regime?	"Woody tissues persist after plant death." Increase fuel load is likely to increase frequency of fire risk.	CDFA	**ML**
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC=Plains grassland; CMA=North Central; Bioreg=Victorian Riverina; VH CLIMATE potential "It is found mostly in pastures and neglected areas. It is strongly competitive with other plants. In Merbein [Victoria]…it has eliminated most other vegetation." Major displacement of grasses/forbs.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
(b) medium value EVC	"It is found mostly in pastures and neglected areas." Requires pH>6. Unlikely to occur in any medium value EVC in Victoria.	P & C (2001)	**L**
(c) low value EVC	"It is found mostly in pastures and neglected areas." Requires pH>6. Unlikely to occur in any low value EVC in Victoria.	P & C (2001)	**L**
11. Impact on structure?	"It is strongly competitive with other plants and, in the Merbein infestation, has eliminated most other vegetation." Is found mostly in pastures and neglected areas. Likely to have a major impact on the lower strata.	P & C (2001)	**ML**
12. Effect on threatened flora?			

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	REFERENCE	RANKING
Fauna			
13. Effect on threatened fauna?			
14. Effect on non-threatened fauna?	In Australia, cattle and sheep graze the plant. However, it is also unpalatable and injurious to some animals. A competitive plant, it may impact on the habitat of native fauna.	P & C (2001) WSNWCB[3]	**ML**
15. Benefits fauna?	Cattle and sheep graze the plant. It may be a limited food source for some species.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
16. Injurious to fauna?	It is injurious to some animals. The spines are present for much of the year.	WSNWCB	**MH**
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	"The plant is confined to the northern parts of Victoria usually associated with irrigation." Rabbits are known to occur in this area and the plant may provide some limited food.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
18. Provides harbor?	Dense patches may provide limited harbor for rabbits.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	Overseas, it is a troublesome weed in cereal and horticultural crops where repeated cultivation aids its spread. It has an extensive root system and strongly competes with other plants. Likely to have serious impacts on yield.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
20. Impact quality?	No documented impact on quality. In the United States the plant is a potential alfalfa seed contaminant.	WSNWCB	**MH**
21. Affect land value?	Where it occurs in pasture situations it is unlikely to affect land value. Sheep and cattle graze the plant without apparent harm (from the spines).	P & C (2001)	**L**
22. Change land use?	In cropping situations cultivation spreads the weed and may increase shoot density. Land use would have to change until the plant was controlled. Change from cropping to permanent pasture.	CDFA	**M**
23. Increase harvest costs?	No evidence.		**L**
24. Disease host/vector?	None evident.		**L**

[1] Tyers, G. Enforcement Officer, Department of Primary Industries, Irymple/Sunraysia. Telephone: 5022 4500. 31/03/03
[2] California Department of Food and Agriculture. *Camelthorn* http://pi.cdfa.ca.gov/weedinfo/ALHAGI2.htm Last accessed 02/07/03
[3] Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. 2003. *Camelthorn*. http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_info/camelthorn.html Last accessed 02/07/03.