Scientific Name: *Verbascum thapsus* Common name: Great mullein

QUESTION	COMMENTS	REFERENCE	RANKING
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	Erect biennial herb to 2.5 metres high. The population density of the invasion depends upon the level of disturbance of a site. In England, an infestation of 5.2 flowering plants per square metre was observed in coppiced woodland two years after they were cut (i.e. at the peak of the flowering cycle). Lesser infestations are more common. Dense infestations would be a nuisance to people.	P & C (2001) Hoshovsky (1986)[1]	**ML**
2. Reduce tourism?	It invades natural meadow and forest openings. In dense infestations, it may affect some recreational activities such as bushwalking.	Remaley (1998)[2]	**ML**
3. Injurious to people?	"The leaf hairs are said to irritate human skin. However, an admirable recent use is in gardens frequented by blind people where its velvet leaves are pleasing to the touch."	P & C (2001)	**ML**
4. Damage to cultural sites?	The plants are quite noticeable and would impose a moderate negative visual effect on cultural sites. The root comprises a single stout deep taproot, which would not cause structural damage.	P & C (2001)	**ML**
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
6. Impact water quality?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
7. Increase soil erosion?	In Victoria *V. thapsus* is most often found as small dense patches on roadsides, railway easements, poorer pastures and unimproved native grasslands. Although the plant does not have an extensive root system, the vegetative cover would limit soil erosion from wind.	P & C (2001)	**L**
8. Reduce biomass?	"Seedling growth rates were 4–7 times faster on bare soils [than on vegetated soils], producing 2000 times more biomass with the same period." Its presence in poorer pasture and unimproved native grassland would increase biomass.	Hoshovsky (1986)	**L**
9. Change fire regime?	A dense, broad-leaved biennial herb, the dead plant matter may increase the fuel load producing a slight increase in the frequency of fire risk. ("The thick wooly leaves were popular insoles in footwear and were even used as temporary outer soles in hard times.")	P & C (2001)	**ML**
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC=Plains grassy woodlands (E); CMA=Glenelg Hopkins; Bioreg=Goldfields; VH CLIMATE potential. "Intolerant of shade…will grow in almost any open area." Occurs in medium to large populations in Victoria. Major impact on grasses and shrubs.	Remaley (1998) Carr *et al* (1992)	**MH**
(b) medium value EVC	EVC=Riparian scrub (E); CMA=Glenelg Hopkins; Bioreg=Glenelg Plain; VH CLIMATE potential. Impact as in 10(a) above.	Remaley (1998) Carr *et al* (1992)	**MH**
(c) low value EVC	EVC=Rock outcrop shrubland (E); CMA=Glenelg Hopkins; Bioreg=Central Victorian Uplands; VH CLIMATE potential. Impact as in 10(a) above.	Remaley (1998) Carr *et al* (1992)	**MH**
11. Impact on structure?	"Once established, it grows more vigorously than many native herbs and shrubs, and its growth can overtake a site in fairly short order." Dense infestations would have a major effect on grasses and forbs.	Remaley (1998)	**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?	The rosettes are rarely eaten by livestock. Likely that native fauna also rarely use the plant as a source of food. The broad rosettes cover a large area thus reducing available fodder.	P & C (2001)	**ML**
15. Benefits fauna?	No documented benefits		**H**
16. Injurious to fauna?	The leaf hairs are said to irritate the mucous membranes of animals' mouths. Possible reason why animals rarely eat the plant?	P & C (2001)	**ML**
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	Not known as a food source to pests.		**L**
18. Provides harbor?	Not known to provide harbor for pest animals.		**L**
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	Animals rarely eat the rosettes, which cover a large area replacing a considerable amount of pasture. Potential to reduce carrying capacity.	P & C (2001)	**MH**
20. Impact quality?	As a biennial, it does not appear to be a problem in cropping situations. Animals rarely eat the rosettes.	P & C (2001)	**L**
21. Affect land value?	The plant is easily controlled in pasture situations through pasture improvement. Occurrence of the plant in this situation is unlikely to affect land value.	P & C (2001)	**L**
22. Change land use?	The plant is easily controlled in pasture situations through pasture improvement. Land use not greatly affected.	P & C (2001)	**L**
23. Increase harvest costs?	Not a weed of cropping	P & C (2001)	**L**
24. Disease host/vector?	None evident.		**L**

[1] Hoshovsky, M., 1986, *Verbascum thapsus*, The Nature Conservancy, Element Stewardship Abstract, http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/documnts/verbtha.html, viewed 03/04/03
[2] Remaley, T., 1998, *Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus *L.*), U.S. National Parks Service, Plant Conservation Alliance, Alien Plant Working Group, http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/veth1.htm, viewed 03/04/03