

## **Pirri Piri Bur – Controlling and managing Extracts from Nibblers online discussion group**

I know this is not quite nibblers territory, but has anyone had any success in controlling pirri pirri bur? It started off at our study centre at Studland and is now beginning to pop up at a number of places around the sand dunes.

David Hodd  
Countryside Manager  
Purbeck Estate

---

David - The ancestral home for PPBurr is of course Lindisfarne NNR. Phil Davey Site Manager for EN should be able to supply you with a synopsis of what control measures they have tried. We have had discussions over a period of many years about this nightmare plant.

Spread of course is largely on the socks of visitors and in the furr of dogs and then dropping off at their next site visit (the seeds dropping off – not the socks or the furr!)

PPB could become a huge problem on many more sites as visitor access increases and with it risk of spread!

I am copying Phil in in the hope that he will reply to us all. I am also copying in Jill Sutcliffe ENs Botanical Officer.

John  
John Bacon, Senior Land Manager, Land Management Unit, English Nature, Box 25, Church Stretton, Shropshire. SY6 7WL. Tel/fax: 01694 723101. E-mail: [jbacon7586@aol.com](mailto:jbacon7586@aol.com).

---

To David Hodd and Nibblers - I have received this reply from Phil Davey at Lindisfarne. Many thanks Phil. Contains some very useful ideas. I have added a few comments.

I am particularly interested in the roto-burying which Phil has mainly been using very successfully to eradicate Spartina on the mud flats. Roto-burying (see Page 3.1. in Practical Solutions Handbook, 2nd edition [PSH]) on sand-dunes may not be as drastic as it sounds and could be an option as it will set succession back to square one which may help other colonists as well. So many sand dunes seem over vegetated now!.

Apart from Phil's thoughts on an article for CLM I am by copy to Jill Sutcliffe asking her if there is the makings here of an extra page for the 'Alien Plants' Section of the PSH, Section 10? Jill - Please liaise with Phil and Tim Coleshaw.

Any other contributions?

yrs

john

John Bacon, Senior Land Manager, Land Management Unit, English Nature, Box 25, Church Stretton, Shropshire. SY6 7WL. Tel/fax: 01694 723101. E-mail: [jbacon7586@aol.com](mailto:jbacon7586@aol.com).

Subj: Re: [nibblers] Pirri Piri Bur

Date: 25/08/2004 11:06:17 GMT Standard Time  
From: [Phil.Davey@English-Nature.Org.UK](mailto:Phil.Davey@English-Nature.Org.UK)  
To: [JBacon7586@aol.com](mailto:JBacon7586@aol.com)  
Sent from the Internet (Details)

>From Phil D:  
John

A quick response to your e-mail - people wishing more info could e-mail/phone me direct. ([phil.davey@english-nature.org.uk](mailto:phil.davey@english-nature.org.uk), tel: 01289 381470).

The dunes on Holy Island and adjacent mainland hold large populations of *Acaena novazelandiae*, pirri-pirri bur.  
It is thought to have originated from the wool (New Zealand imports) industry on the Tweed.

It may have escaped from a National Trust property garden. I recently highlighted the fact with SNH that Inverewe gardens in Sutherland has healthy populations of *Acaena* which appears to be spreading throughout the property and which is not controlled. More worryingly was its proximity to paths and people!!

As John says it is probably easily spread by people/dogs to other sites especially by naturists/student groups who go from one site to another.

Control options:

1. It doesn't like wet/frosty conditions and prefers fairly open ground so more likely on yellow dunes.
2. On larger areas rotoburying (stoneburier) is effective for several years at least so far.
3. Off the NNR where there is less of it, we are trying to eradicate it by - digging, - pulling - (and glyphosate - Roundup Biactive - see '8' below).
4. Smothering can be used.
5. Very recently we have used goats to graze it. It works but is quite time - consuming. With stock it is essential to safeguard against them transferring it to another site /part of site. (Phil - ? from JB - are seeds viable after they have passed through the gut? - could you try erminating some!!).
6. We have also used carpet dragged behind a quad to pick up seed along main visitor routes. (I feel a paper for Enact coming on!!) (Phil - am copying in Tony R at CLM - its changed its name now!).
7. Burning appears less effective.

Herbicides:

8. Roundup, especially repeated treatments, will kill the plant and of course anything else. No specialist herbicide available to my knowledge. (Phil - note from JB - agreed, we could not find it mentioned on any labels [not surprising] when we were writing the Herbicide Handbook but it might be worth looking for mention of any other species in the same family/genera - if there are any. My old CTW indicates its the only one in the UK, ?? Jill S).

Other comments:

We use signs to warn people of the problem (ridiculed by Country Life some years ago) and wear wellies from June to November.

Kids can be encouraged to make snowballs with it but there is a risk here too!!  
My advice to David is to get rid of it asap as it will become an increasing problem. Trusts with gardens should be strongly encouraged to remove it totally from their properties as this is another likely source of spread !!

Phil Davey , Lindisfarne NNR. English Nature.

---

I must defend the naturists here. There is no pirri pirri on the naturist section of the beach. I think you could be right about transmission on socks and boots. The worst area is around the study centre.

And that reminds me: that a friend of a friend of mine went on a field trip to Lindisfarne as a student. Later that day the lecturer took them to an upland site (presumably somewhere in the Cheviots), and discovered pirri pirri growing along a riverside too. The lecturer concluded it was introduced by the field trip he ran the previous year.

I should also point out that Inverewe is run by the National Trust for Scotland not the National Trust. We only bother making the distinction in situations like this.

Thanks for the comments. We've definately got some ideas to try out...  
David Hodd  
Countryside Manager  
Purbeck Estate

01929 450259 ext 22

---