

BIO-HAZARD

Parthenium hysterophorus

Parthenium hysterophorus, Parthenium weed, is native to Central and South America and has become invasive in tropical and sub-tropical areas worldwide. It is classified as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species. *P. hysterophorus* has already been found in numerous localities in the south of the KNP.

Identification

Description:

P. hysterophorus is a short-lived ephemeral herb, reaching 2m high in good soils (usually 50 to 150cm). *P. hysterophorus* germinates after rain and the seeds have a life-span of up to 20 years in the soil.

Leaves:

The leaves are pale green with some of the leaves containing allergens.

Flowers:

The flowers are white in colour, terminal and occur in small compact heads. They flower from September to May.

Fruits:

The fruits are in the form of achenes and the seeds are black and 2mm long.



Figure 1: *P. hysterophorus* flowers



Figure 2: *P. hysterophorus* bush

Damage

P. hysterophorus forms a dense ground cover, crowding out or preventing the regeneration of indigenous species. It invades roadsides, watercourses and overgrazed land. *P. hysterophorus* is also an irritant, affecting the skin and respiratory tract of humans.

Control

Chemical and mechanical methods are currently the only methods available for the control of *P. hysterophorus*. Natural enemies are currently being investigated.

Contact address

Please report any sightings of *Parthenium hysterophorus* in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park to:

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