



## media release

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Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009

### **Sydney Wattle painting the town yellow**

The invasive yellow Sydney Golden Wattle is back with a vengeance this year in gardens and reserves across Albany, spreading at a fast rate and choking endemic vegetation in its path.

The Friends of the Bila Boya and King River Reserves group is urging Albany residents to remove the Sydney Golden Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*), an invasive species native to the eastern states.

According to the group's spokesperson Justin Hardy, the Sydney Golden Wattle has taken a major foothold around Albany and reduced biodiversity, especially around Mt Melville, Little Grove, Oyster Harbour and Lower King.

"The Sydney Golden Wattle produces millions of seeds every year that are spread by birds and germinate in the ground quickly. It's so much easier to remove the saplings when they're small and before they become heavy seed producing trees, which is usually in their second or third year," Mr Hardy explained.

The group is working hard to stop the wattle from building up in the King River area and estimates it has removed over a thousand trees in the past five years.

Mr Hardy said more has to be done to stop the spread and a coordinated effort was required between government departments, community groups and landowners.

"The community needs to mop-up its own backyard and keep constant vigil. If you take a walk along a river course or a track it's very easy to pull up about 30 wattle saplings in half an hour, which shows just how bad the problem is becoming."

The best way to remove the large wattles is with a basal-bark application and the smaller wattles can be simply pulled or cut down, mulched and removed from the site.

Non-profit community-based group South Coast NRM has recently provided the Friends of the Bila Boya and King River Reserves group over \$10,000 to step up its weeding efforts together with Oyster Harbour Catchment Group and Greenskills.

As part of the initiative, for a limited time eligible King River locals have been offered the chance to have the Sydney Golden Wattle removed from their properties in exchange for free local native plants.

If successful, the “Weed Swap” program may be expanded to other areas around Albany.

For more information on how to identify and remove the Sydney Golden Wattle, call Justin Hardy on 9844 3554 or South Coast NRM invasive species coordinator Matthew Kennewell on 9845 8520.

**ENDS**

PICTURE CAPTION

**WEED WARRIORS:** Friends of the Bila Boya and King River Reserves group members Wim Berg, Gavin Higgins and Judy Berg swap Sydney Golden Wattle for local natives in the Millbrook area.

**PICTURE TAKEN BY:** Justin Hardy

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**South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management on the South Coast. As an independent not-for-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing waterways and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.**