

Monadenia - Time Efficient Weeding

by Peter Tucker, Trees For Life



Background

Monadenia (*Disa bracteata* formerly *Monadenia bracteata*) is a highly invasive orchid from southern Africa. The author has counted up to 79 mature individuals in one square meter. Over a short 20 years, this weed is now present through much of the Mount Lofty Ranges and could be expanding into the lower Flinders Ranges in South Australia. Monadenia is also a weed in Western Australia and Victoria.

Monadenia produces dust-like seed that is spread by wind.

Monadenia is quite distinctive with a rosette of flaccid leaves that usually have a purple tinge underneath. The flower stalk produces many small flowers clustered together. When first emerging the flower stalk looks like a very thick piece of asparagus.

Monadenia flower stalk

Occasionally, native sun and onion orchids (*Thelymitra* spp and *Microtis* spp.) are confused with monadenia. Look for the single rigid leaf of native orchids to distinguish it from monadenia.



L-R Monadenia leaf, note purple colour under leaf. Rigid leaf of native *Thelymitra* spp. orchid. Monadenia rosette with early development of flower head.

The Trials

Bush For Life, a bush regeneration program managed by the non-profit, non-government organisation Trees For Life, undertook weeding trials in 2005 encompassing 17 different treatment options at 3 life stages in order to determine the best time efficient method of killing monadenia. Techniques included those being used by other NGOs in South Australia and Western Australia.

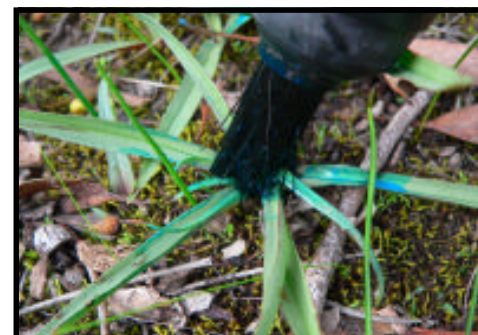


Flags marking 79 mature monadenia in 1 square metre

The most efficient recommendation

Based on this preliminary trial, for monadenia occurring in bushland Bush For Life recommends using a Weedbrush (or shoe polish applicator) with Glyphosate diluted 1:4 with water at all growth stages before flowering. Once a flower stalk is present the Tongs of Death (stainless steel kitchen tongs with sponges attached with nylon thread) may be easier to use.

In large areas that are heavily infested spot spraying with Glyphosate at 1:100 including a penetrant is recommended. Care will be required to avoid killing native plants.



Wiping Monadenia with a weed brush