

Weed Spotters Network Queensland



Bulletin June 2026

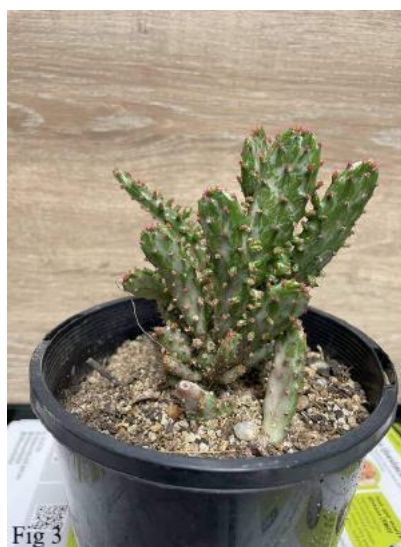
Cactus compliance prevents future invasions

Dear Thomas,

A strong compliance program over the past few years has significantly reduced the number of prohibited and restricted (regulated) cactus species being sold as garden ornamentals in Queensland. Thousands of plants have been seized and on-the-spot fines issued. Despite the success, a few species are still being sold and awareness needs to be improved. It is vital to block the primary invasion pathway for weeds, namely their sale as ornamentals. Unfortunately, not everyone realises that weeds often start in people's backyards.

Regulated cacti are sometimes found being sold in nurseries as well as at markets and by backyard sellers. Cacti are among the regulated species more commonly found being sold.

[Cochineal cactus \(*Opuntia cochenillifera*\)](#) was recently reported being sold in a retail nursery in Western Queensland (fig. 1), and at a market in Brisbane (fig. 2). Cochineal cactus is a restricted (category 2,3,4,5) species in Queensland, and like other Opuntoid cacti, poses a significant risk to arid and semi-arid regions of Queensland were it to escape cultivation. Another Opuntoid cactus, the variegated *O. monacantha* 'Joseph's Coat', a restricted (category 3) species, was reported late last year in a retail nursery in Southern Queensland (fig. 3). Each of these reports resulted in an investigation by Biosecurity Queensland and the seizure of the regulated plants.



What can you do?

1. **Look out for regulated species being sold or given away.** It's always a good time to spot weeds but now is particularly timely with the recent changes to the prohibited and restricted species lists, including the addition of several new species that were previously unregulated (see the [May Bulletin](#) for a summary of the updates).
2. **Know what you're buying.** Weed Spotters know weeds, but not everybody does. Sellers may not know that what they are selling is a regulated species or even what the species is.
3. **If you suspect it, report it.** If you think you may have seen a [prohibited and restricted](#) weed being sold or given away, don't approach the seller, instead take a photo if it is safe to do so (or screenshot if it is an online ad), note the location and any other relevant details, and reach out to your [Weed Spotters regional coordinator](#) or Biosecurity Queensland on **13 25 23** or [online](#).

Thank you to all of our Weed Spotters for looking out for [prohibited and restricted](#) (category 2) weeds during

Thank you to all of our weed spotters for looking out for [promoted and reserved](#) (category 2) weeds during your regular activities, and a special thanks to those who have reported suspected sightings, including those notifiers who prefer to remain anonymous. You are helping to keep your local area free of new high-risk weeds.

Have you seen these weeds?



Opuntia cochenillifera (cochineal cactus)

Cochineal cactus is a much-branched shrub with linear to narrowly obovate pads with numerous white glochids (barbed hair-like bristles) and showy pink flowers.

[Find out more](#)



Opuntia microdasys (bunny ears cactus)

Bunny ears cactus is a dense shrub 40-60cm tall with round to oval pads that grow in pairs, giving the appearance of bunny ears, with numerous white or yellow glochids (hair-like bristles), 2-3mm long, in dense clusters.

[Find out more](#)

Monthly weed notifications

There were 2 weed notifications for May 2026.

[Find out more](#)



Regional coordinator profile: Gavin O'Connor



Gavin works for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI) as a Biosecurity Officer in the Invasive Plants and Animals unit covering the south-western shires in Queensland.

Based in Charleville, he is part of a small unit that monitors and responds to emerging invasive plant and animal species. He also engages with Local Governments to assist in the operational and legislation requirements of their biosecurity plans.

Gavin has a mixed background in conservation management with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and DAF Forestry. In a previous career he was involved with family farming businesses. His interests involve conservation of ecosystems and enjoying the solitude of the Australian bush.

Gavin is the coordinator for Charleville and can assist with the identification of weeds in this region. gavin.oconnor@dpi.qld.gov.au.

Emerging weeds to watch for in your region this month:

- [South East Queensland](#)
- [Burnett-Mary](#)
- [Queensland Murray Darling Region](#)
- [Condamine](#)
- [Desert Channels](#)
- [South West Queensland](#)
- [Fitzroy Basin](#)
- [Mackay-Whitsunday](#)
- [Southern Gulf](#)
- [Northern Gulf](#)
- [Dry Tropics](#)
- [Wet Tropics](#)
- [Cape York](#)
- [Torres Strait](#)

New to the Weed Spotters Network?

Members of the Weed Spotters Network aim to detect and report new and emerging high-risk priority target weeds before they become established in Queensland. Are you ready to start spotting weeds in your region? [Download the Weed Spotters Handbook](#).

If you suspect that you have found a weed that is a [prohibited, or restricted \(Category 2\) invasive plant](#), contact Biosecurity Queensland on **13 25 23**, email photos to Queensland.Herbarium@gld.gov.au or contact your [Weed Spotters regional coordinator](#).



Missed something?

Previous Weed Spotters bulletins are available [online](#)



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[Weed Spotters Network Queensland](#) is a joint project between the [Queensland Herbarium](#), the [Department of Primary Industries](#) and local governments with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

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