

# THE BRADLEY METHOD OF ELIMINATING EXOTIC PLANTS FROM NATURAL RESERVES.

(RE-WRITTEN FROM ARTICLE BY T. C. FULLER AND G.  
DOUGLAS BARBE IN FREMONTIA, JULY 1985)

THE SYSTEM GETS ITS NAME FROM TWO SISTERS (BOTH  
OVER FIFTY) WHO MAINTAINED OPEN SPACE IN  
AUSTRALIA.

## Preliminaries

**Permits and Permission** must be obtained to carry out  
weed control.

**Plant Identification.** Although it is not necessary to  
know every species in the area, it is essential to be sure that  
no natives are pulled or killed and that no weeds are left  
behind. If in doubt about a plant, leave it and get help in  
identification.

**Labor.** A single person working intelligently will do more  
good than many people crashing through an area.

**Strategy.** The basis of this method is the native species'  
ability to recolonize by tipping the ecological balance away  
from the weeds and toward the native plants. If one begins  
by clearing the weeds out of the most heavily infested  
areas, the weeds will come right back because they are  
provided ideal conditions- bare, disturbed soil exposed to  
to full sunlight.  
Instead, by working a little at a time, from the strongholds  
of natural vegetation towards the weeds, the native  
vegetation is favored and its natural regenerative power  
will prevail over the weeds.

## Plan the Work

In this sequence the Bradleys designed work for one  
person to follow, working from the best stand of native  
vegetation to the worst infestation of weeds. By keeping  
the sequence always the same, it can be by any number of  
people in any number of places.

1. **Prevent Deterioration of Good Areas.** Start  
by getting rid of weeds that occur singly or in small groups.  
Check once or twice a year for new or missed weeds.

2. **Improve the Next Best.** Choose a place that  
you can visit easily and often, where the native vegetation  
is pushing against a mixture of weeds, preferably not worse  
than one weed to two natives. Start with a strip about 12  
feet wide and no longer than you can cover about once a  
month during the growing season. If this boundary is on a  
slope that might erode, clear small patches instead, but  
still no more than a dozen feet from vigorous native

vegetation. Let a few months go by. Your experience will  
dictate how much more is warranted.

3. **Hold the Advantage Gained.** Resist the  
temptation to push deeper into the weeds before the  
regenerating natives have stabilized each cleared area. The  
natives need not be very tall but should but should form a  
dense cover.

4. **Cautiously Move Into the Really Bad Areas.**  
When the new growth consists almost entirely of native  
species with only a few weeds, it is safe to move further  
into the weeds. *Don't start to clear a block of solid weeds  
until you have brought the good native vegetation right  
up to that area.* Solid infestations of weeds can be worked  
on the edges by forming peninsulas of weeds, small  
clearings less than six feet in diameter. Also removing  
weeds from around a single native within an infestation  
can allow it to grow much faster. There is no reason to  
hurry this process; much more is gained by allowing the  
native plant to grow well before removing another adjacent  
weed.

## Records

Make periodic surveys and map infestations.

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For more information about the Invasive Plant group  
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