

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING TRACK OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS

Why keep records of biocontrol sites?

Good records will help you to plan and report on progress. They also provide vital information if the role of managing your sites is transferred to another person.

What is Landcare Research's role in keeping records about release sites?

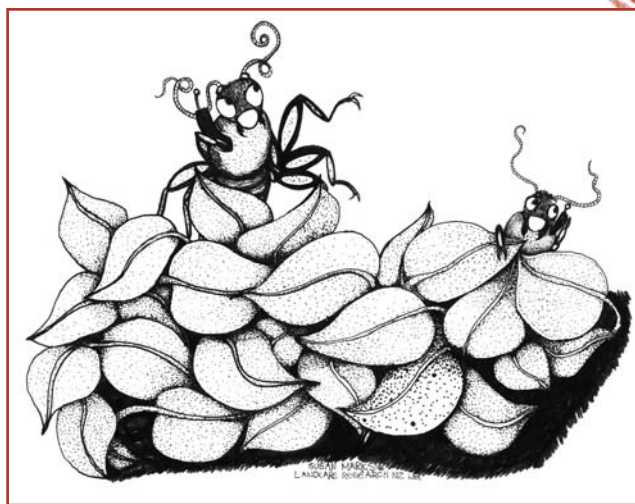
Landcare Research maintains a database of biological control agents that they have released against weeds in New Zealand since the 1980s. When you receive biological control agents from Landcare Research we will ask you to complete a release form so that the details can be entered on the database. After an appropriate interval we will ask you to complete a recovery form describing the fate of the release. Landcare Research staff can help you to do this monitoring if you are not confident to do it alone. Landcare Research continues to collect information about sites until they are well established or considered to have failed.

What records should others keep?

We recommend that all organisations keep records of sites in their area, especially details that are beyond the scope of the Landcare Research database, such as updates on the progress of well established sites, and the redistribution of agents to new sites. Landcare Research staff will not actively seek this information from you but are glad to receive it and add it to the database.

What information should I collect and when?

You should keep the amount of information collected to a minimum as it is a waste of time to store details that will never be used. You can use the recovery forms we have



developed for each species, or alter them to meet your own needs. We have included instructions on the back to help you fill them out correctly.

Landcare Research staff will often send out reminders when it is time to check release sites, but if in doubt you can refer to the appropriate information sheet for the agent to find out how and when to check for establishment.

How can I use this information?

You can use the simple monitoring information you have collected to describe the fate of a release, and if successful, the spread of the control agents. Two terms are commonly used: recovered and established. Agents that have only one generation per year (univoltine) are said to have been recovered if they are found 1 year after they were released, and established when they have been found in increasing numbers for 2 or more years after release. Agents that have several generations per year (multivoltine) are considered to have established when they have completed several generations, increased in numbers, and survived a winter.

Although you may record a reduction in weed density you cannot use this as evidence of the effectiveness of control agents. Experimental trials are necessary to demonstrate that a decline



in the weed population is caused by a biological control agent and not some other factor.

See *Techniques for assessing the impact of biocontrol agents*.

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