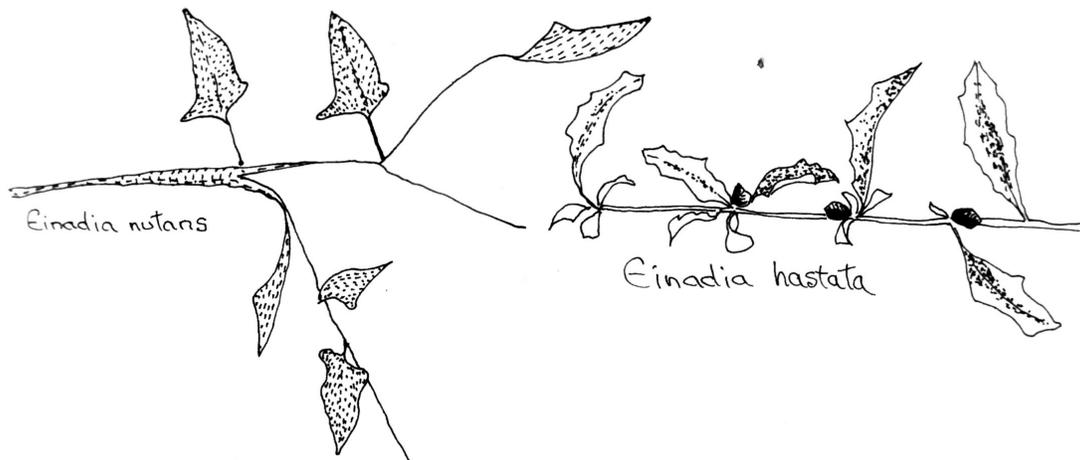


***Galenia pubescens* – carpet weed**

Galenia pubescens is a newly emerging weed in Riddells Creek. It is a native of South Africa and has become prolific in our prolonged warmer conditions which have created higher soil temperatures. It forms a roughly circular mat on the ground, growing out from a central root, very similar in habit to wire weed or hog weed, except that *Galenia* has substantial, thick, vertical layering. It has a greyish to olive appearance and can grow to 1.6M across with thick, woody stems. Leaves are alternatively arranged, oblong to spoon shaped, succulent with a waxy surface and very hairy if viewed in magnification. Flowers are small and white with a pink tinge. Care in identification is necessary so as not to confuse it with the native perennial groundcover Nodding Saltbush – *Einadia nutans* which has arrow shaped leaves or with *Einadia hastata*, both of which have succulent red berries and also form a carpet (see below).



Galenia is a prolific seeder over time and it out competes all grasses and groundcovers. At the moment it is growing prevalently in the streets where the gas mains have disturbed the soil.. But left to flourish it will take over your lawn as it has in many Sunbury yards. It disrupts the light, prevents moisture from

getting to grass species and forms a monoculture. There is no point mowing it as you are only scalping the verticals and leaving the laterals and spreading around seed.

Galenia is a perennial weed and its widespread occurrence along roadsides from Melbourne to Geelong and Ballarat threatens the honey industry as bees love it but it taints the taste of honey.

How to fix it?

Integrated Pest Management is an approach that requires you to understand the plant growth cycle, then employ a strategy which considers all the options available to deal with it. It flowers from spring to summer thus seeds for over 6 months of the year. You can roll up the carpet and dig out the root with a pick, being mindful that the taproot may be half to three quarters of a metre. Happy digging! Monitor it for regrowth and dig it out again if it grows from the central tap root or from seed. After rolling up the carpet, put it in a bag and incinerate it at the appropriate time.

Herbicide treatment.

This prostrate perennial is a serious opponent. It is difficult to control in one operation and should be treated at the time of fresh spring or summer growth. It is best not to engage in repeat treatments of an ineffective herbicide. Effective control can be attained by application of the proper herbicide to work in the root system. Selective control of this plant can be achieved, but it is a job best left to a registered contractor who is trained in the appropriate use of Group I herbicides.

To stop the spread of this weed before it covers our town we are setting up an interactive map so people can put their own sightings of carpet weed on the map of Riddells Creek. Go to

<http://riddellscreeksustainability.org.au/special/map/carpetweed>

Further information including identification of weeds can be sought from – The Department of Primary Industries website – www.dpi.vic.gov.au which has a good colour photo of Galenia

In the next issue we will deal with weeds that need to be treated in May.

Advice and practical help can be obtained from Rick Weaver, WeedPro, phone 0448 334243 or 5427 3931