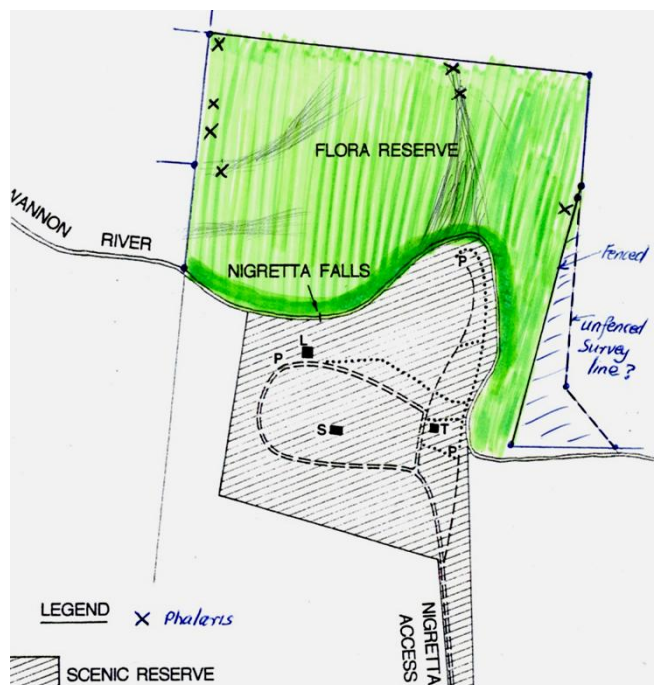


## HFNC weed control report for Nigretta Flora Reserve 2013

African Weed Orchid (AWO) were found in tens of thousands on this 12-ha Flora Reserve in 2009; efforts were immediately made to try and control the menace. That work has continued annually in Oct-Nov. However, we also attacked hotspots of *Phalaris*. The pasture weeds in the northern fringe were introduced in the years before 1985 when the reserve was grazed. From 1975-1978 HFNC petitioned the Lands Dept to cancel the grazing lease (held by either AC Young or then adjoining owner RJ Mills of "Inverness"). The LCC gave it Flora Reserve status in 1982.



On Sunday 27 Oct RB & DL, JC & GC, R & I, & PH gained access to the site via Ross Robson's property on the north side of the Wannon River and herbicide-wiped 4,800 AWO over most of the area (total of 39 hrs). The herbicide-wipe mix used was glyphosate, metsulfuron methyl, wetter and dye. An area of *Phalaris* and *Galium aparine* (Cleavers) near the mid-part of the northern fence was sprayed with Glyphosate. Another small area in the adjacent gully was also sprayed and the area in the NW corner treated in 2012 was re-treated to control those weeds (more work is needed on the *Galium*). A total of 5 L of spray was used.

On Friday 1 Nov the river level was low enough to enable RB to cross the rocks from the south side and 2,370 AWO were

herbicide-wiped (9 hrs). The plants were flowering and this was regarded as the last opportunity to poison them – any later and the plants could set viable seed and also the corms might not die. Attention was also paid to *Gladiolus undulatus* (Wild Gladiolus) a new threat. This weed is expanding above the river's edge, with some spots appearing above in the reserve.

On Monday 3 Nov RT crossed the river and dug 275 untreated AWO (3 hrs) from the Flora Res.

On Saturday 9 Nov RB, DL, PH & JS drove around to the north side and dug 630 and pulled 150 untreated AWO. There were many tiny AWO but also many larger plants also missed earlier and it is certain that some still remain undetected but this has been the most exhaustive work so far at this site. Four small areas of *Phalaris* & *Galium* infestation were also sprayed (8 L) – see map. The time worked was 20 man-hrs.

The 2013 tally of 8,275 plants is higher than last year, perhaps due to a more comprehensive search this year. It is clear that we are dealing with plants arising from a hefty soil seed store from previous years, as well as destroying plants that we had only pulled the tops from without extracting the corms. One wonders what the situation would be now if we had done nothing since finding well over 23,000 plants in 2009!

The record for the last 5 years is shown below:

- 2013 – 8,125 plants herbicide-wiped or dug plus 150 untreated plants pulled to remove heads.
- 2012 – 6,800 plants wiped & dug plus 100 untreated plants pulled to remove heads
- 2011 – 5,000 plants wiped plus 500 untreated plants pulled to remove heads
- 2010 – 10,140 wiped plus 3,580 pulled, but far NW and far NE areas not covered
- 2009 – 2,290 plants dug plus 20,280 pulled to remove seed heads (NW area not covered)

Since each plant can produce an enormous number of viable seeds that spread easily with the wind we must continue to do our best to remove all plants from the area. Whether it will be possible is the question. We need to use the easiest and most efficient method – herbicide-wiping – but we must start in early October to allow enough time for the herbicide to work before seed is set.