

Get to know a weed expert

All the activities in this booklet can be completed with minimal expertise and knowledge of weeds. However, your class will benefit greatly if you get in touch with a weed expert. Ideally, try to arrange a visit.

A weed expert can:

- identify weed species collected locally by students;
- explain why particular species are a problem;
- describe what is being done to manage weeds in the area;
- highlight what students can do to help prevent new weed problems and manage existing ones;
- discuss the benefits of students and their families becoming involved in programs such as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare or Weedbusters; and
- provide information material such as posters, brochures and fact sheets.

Local weed experts can be found in government or community groups. Try to find a:

- council environment officer,
- state or territory government weeds officer,
- volunteer from a local group (e.g. Landcare or 'Friends of' group),
- regional weed strategy coordinator,
- local farmer known for his/her efforts in weed control, or
- state or territory National Weedbuster Week coordinator.

When organising the weed expert to speak to your students, make sure you provide clear guidelines. Most weed experts do not deal with groups of young students often, and may need a little help. The following are worth considering:

- Try to limit the session to 40 minutes.
- Students may like to prepare some questions before the visit.
- Students will be more readily engaged if the speaker provides some personal detail about what they do, how they came to be doing it, what they like most/least about their job.
- Gather a selection of weeds from around the school ground for the weed expert to discuss.
- Ask the expert if students can make a video or audio recording of the session.
- Discuss with the weed expert which activity from this book you want them to cover.

