

## Fennel

*Foeniculum vulgare*  
syn. *F.officinale*



# Fennel



TAMAR VALLEY  
Weed Strategy Working Group  
*everybody's problem - our plan*

## Plant Description

<b>Family:</b>	<i>Apiaceae</i>
<b>Botanical Name:</b>	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> . Miller syn <i>F.officinale</i> . All.
<b>Origin:</b>	Europe and Western Asia
<b>Growth Habit:</b>	Fennel is a bright green herb with feathery leaves that smell like aniseed. Flowering stems up to 2.5m high are produced from the centre of the plant each spring. It has a stout branched taproot and grows best in open, un-shaded situations.
<b>Type of Plant:</b>	Perennial, edible herb.
<b>Flowers:</b>	At the end of each flowering stem there is an umbel of small greenish yellow flowers.
<b>Fruit/Seeds:</b>	Aromatic seeds replace the small flowers at the end of the flowering stems in Summer and Autumn. Seeds are yellow-brown when fresh to grey-brown on drying ( <i>Parsons &amp; Cutbbertson 2001</i> ).



*Close up of foliage of Fennel.*  
(Photo: L. Adamson)

## Contents:

*Plant Description* 1

*Plant Distribution & Dispersal* 1

*Weed Status* 1

*Weed Impacts* 2

*Botanical Diagram* 2

*Control Methods* 3

*Further References* 3

## Weed Status:

- Fennel is a Declared Weed in Tasmania.
- However, Tasmania also grows fennel as a commercial crop.

## Plant Distribution & Dispersal

<b>Dispersal:</b>	Seeds fall to the ground very near the parent plant. The plant is spread when seeds contaminate agricultural produce, machinery, animal skins and human clothing or in dumped garden waste. Earth moving equipment may drag seeds and pieces of plant crown and root to new locations ( <i>Parsons &amp; Cutbbertson 2001</i> ). Seeds are moved by water along drainage lines.
<b>Distribution:</b>	Although fennel occurs widely as a weed throughout Tasmania, feral plants are not considered to have any agricultural impact. Fennel is usually confined to open, exposed sites such as roadsides, railways, wastelands, channels and drains. It is restricted to places where there is available water or runoff.



Close up of Fennel flowers.  
(Photo: L. Adamson)

## Weed Impacts

- Once well established fennel excludes most other plants. This may be due to its unusual chemical properties (known as allelopathy).
- Because the plant is deep rooted it can re-grow from crown and root pieces left after cultivation or scalping (*Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001*).
- The distilled oil has an aniseed taste and is used as a food flavouring, for medicinal purposes, in beauty preparations and in air fresheners.
- Because many people collect fennel roots, leaves and seeds from the roadsides for culinary purposes, a strong dye and large signs should be used to alert the public when herbicides have been used to control this weed in public areas.

### WARNING!

Care should be taken  
when collecting Fennel  
for consumption . . .

## Similar Plants

*Care should be taken not to confuse fennel with the highly poisonous Hemlock which has similar growth habits and seeds. Hemlock has a distinctly "mousy" smell and has purple/reddish spotting along the stems and branchlets and white flowers. Please refer to TVWS Leaflet: Hemlock.*

*No Tasmania native flora species are similar in characteristics to Fennel.*

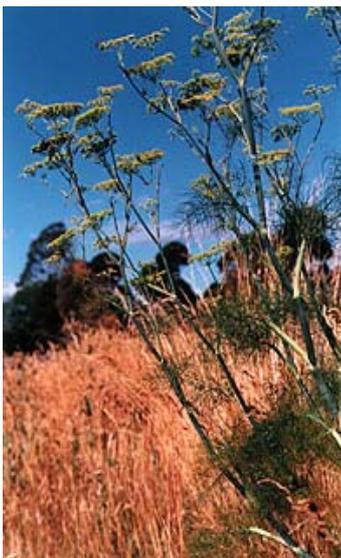
## Botanical Diagram



## Control Methods

Control:	Time Applicable:	Notes:
SLASHING	ALL YEAR ROUND	(a) Slashing prior and over the flowering period will stop further seeding. Also useful prior to using a herbicide especially if using a wiper applicator.  <i>Spraying should be undertaken while the plant is actively growing, but prior to flowering.</i>
SEEDHEAD REMOVAL	SEP - MAR	
SPOT SPRAYING	SEP - MAR	(b) Herbicides registered for use on fennel include glyphosate (e.g. RoundUp ®, Glyphosate 360 ®), dicamba (e.g. Banvil ®), triclopyr (e.g. Garlon ®) and MCPA (e.g. MCPA 500 ®). <i>Product labels should be carefully consulted for quantities &amp; situations to be used.</i>
WIPING	OCT - MAR	(c) Glyphosate-based products may also be used in a weed wiper. <i>Refer to the label for current recommendations.</i>

N.B. The herbicides mentioned on this documents may not necessarily be registered for use on the plant referred to. **Always check the herbicide label before use.**



## Further References

### Internet:

Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment: [www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au)

National Weed Strategy: [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au)

CRC for Weed Management: [www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/CRCWMS](http://www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/CRCWMS)

### Books:

Blood, K. (2001). *Environmental Weeds. A Field Guide for SE Australia*. C.H.Jerram Science Publishers, Victoria, Australia.

Muyt, A. (2001). *Bush Invaders of South East Australia*. R.G. & F.J. Richardson Victoria, Australia.

Parsons, W.T. & Cuthbertson, E.G. (2001) *Noxious Weeds of Australia. Second Edition*. CSIRO Publishing, Victoria Australia

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