

Tarrangower Cactus Control Group: Student Field Day Feedback

Roxborough College November 2013

In November 2013 fifteen students (10 males and 5 females) from Roxborough College attended a one day cactus control field trip to Maldon/Baringhup. The average age was 14 years, ranging from 13 to 15 years. Students rated their knowledge of managing environmental weeds before the field day, from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The average rating was 2.4 (medium) out of 5 (range 1 to 4). They also rated their knowledge of wheel cactus before the field day, from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a lot). The average rating was 2.1 (low) out of 5 (range from 2 to 5). None of the students had been on a cactus control field trip before. Only one student reported having knowledge about ways to control wheel cactus before the field day. This student mentioned injecting chemical as a method of control.

Students provided feedback on knowledge acquisition and their experience of the field trip. On a scale from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a lot) they rated how much they learned about wheel cactus on the field trip. The average rating was 2.9, ranging from 1 to 5. They were asked to indicate the types of information they had acquired and these results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Knowledge acquired by students during the field trip

Knowledge area	Number of students	Percent YES
Country of origin	2	13
How it came to Australia	4	27
Where it is found in Australia	7	47
Growing habit	8	53
How it reproduces	12	80
How it spreads	12	80
Preferred habitat	4	27
What works to control wheel cactus	8	53
What doesn't work to control wheel cactus	6	40

Students rated how much they learned about wheel cactus control during the field trip, from 1 indicating nothing to 5 a lot. The average rating was 3.7, ranging from 2 to 5. On a rating scale ranging from 1 (extremely worthwhile) to 5 (not at all worthwhile) the average rating 2.1 (range 1-3), indicating all the students thought the field trip was very worthwhile. All the students said they would recommend the cactus control field days to other students and/or groups.

Students also provided feedback on what they liked most about the field trip. Eight students liked killing cacti, two liked spray painting treated cacti, one liked helping the community while another enjoyed the food, two liked having a day off school and two other students appreciated new learning: *learned new things about cacti and ways to control them.*

When asked to comment on what they liked least about the field trip two students stated there was nothing they did not like, indicating a positive experience. One student said the field day was too short but three students did not like the long drive and another said it was too long. Three students also did like the walking involved.