

Tarrangower Cactus Control Group: Student Field Day Feedback

Roxburgh College June 2014

In June 2014 twenty three students (17 males and 6 females) from Roxburgh College attended a one day cactus control field trip to Maldon/Baringhup. The average age was 13 years, ranging from 12 to 14 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 2.0 (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 1.8 (low) out of 5 (range from 1 to 3). Only 1 of the students had been on a cactus control field trip before. Seven students reported having knowledge about ways to control wheel cactus before the field day. Five students mentioned poisoning cactus, one said it could be killed by pulling the roots out and putting the plant in the bin and another said the plant could be uprooted and buried.

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 4.4, 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	15	65
How it came to Australia	22	97
Where it is found in Australia	16	70
Growing habit	15	65
How it reproduces	14	61
How it spreads	20	87
Preferred habitat	12	52
What works to control wheel cactus	20	87
What doesn't work to control wheel cactus	18	78

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 4.3, ranging from 2 to 5. On a rating scale ranging from 1 (extremely worthwhile) to 5 (not at all worthwhile) the average rating 1.8 (range 1-5), 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. Six students reported they liked killing cactus while another nine liked killing cactus and the BBQ lunch. One reported liking the killing, spray painting and the food, another enjoyed spray painting the treated cacti, three liked the BBQ food and three mentioned killing cactus to control it and help the environment:

I enjoyed being out in the fresh air and helping our environment.

How to kill cactus in different ways and how it got to Aust.

Killing the cactus. Controlling the cactus. Helping the environment

When asked to comment on what they liked least about the field trip eight students stated there was nothing they did not like while another said the day went too fast,

indicating a positive experience. Five students said they did not like seeing the bones of dead animals, six did not like the long bus trip, one said it was dirty and two others did not like being pricked by the cactus.