

this type. Meanwhile, several dozen new species occurring in Tasmanian waters have been described, others have been newly recorded, and taxonomy above species level has changed dramatically, especially thanks to the advances made possible by genetic studies. Kershaw's 1955 list recorded almost 1200 species as Tasmanian: the new list records 1357 (not counting species from and surrounding Macquarie Island), of which nine are considered introduced and two suspected extinct from the State. The list includes those species sometimes referred to as "marginal marine" or "saltmarsh" species, for example the five recorded species of ellobiid. Uncertain species (whether for taxonomic reasons or because records are unconfirmed) are noted as mysteries that may someday be resolved.

This publication includes an alphabetic index of species, genera and subgenera, a two-page non-exhaustive reference list, and an introduction that discusses the fauna's geographic affinities and the preparation of the list in question, as well as the taxonomic list itself. The authors have been cautious with the placement of some of the more contentious or unclear groups and thus a small number of species, genera and families appear as "unplaced" listings (most notably, several families appear as "order unplaced" at the end of Subclass Eogastropoda).

As a terrestrial malacologist who dabbles selectively in the marine fauna I have learnt quite a deal from perusing this list already. For instance, those disappointed with Tasmania's cone shell fauna (usually quoted as two species, *Conus anemone* and *C. rutilus*, the latter being scarce) will be interested to note not only that the authors record a third species in the genus, *C. clarus*, but also that several genera formerly considered to be turrids have now joined the Family Conidae.

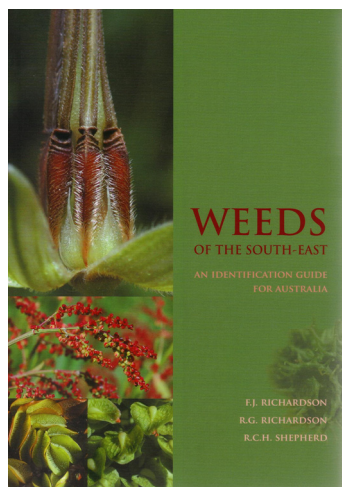
This list has been a work in progress for many years, alas outliving two of its co-authors, to whom it is dedicated (Kershaw passed away in 2003, Smith in 2006). Both would have been very pleased to see this latest step in the documentation of the State's marine fauna finally published.

Weeds of the South-east: An Identification Guide for Australia by F.J. Richardson, R.G. Richardson & R.C.H. Shepherd, R.G. and F.J. Richardson, 2006, full colour, soft cover, 438 pages.

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With weeds, in particular environmental weeds, becoming more of an issue and as our knowledge increases about the impacts of weeds in many sectors, it is very timely that this book has been produced. Identifying weeds is the first step in managing them. Once identified, further information on the control of the species, its poisonous properties or if in fact it is a weed rather than a native can be sought.

The book claims to be aimed at a wide range of people, from those that deal with weeds on a daily basis through to any one who holds land, including those that only come across weeds in their backyards. I think that this book is a must have for those upon whom weeds have a direct impact, those who have a real interest in them, or for those whom it is crucial in knowing what weed species they are dealing with so they can then be properly managed.



This book gives information on over 2000 weed species. It includes botanic names, common names, brief diagnostic descriptions, habitat information, location by states and it is plastered with stacks of wonderful images (>1600 of them). Many of them are just superb. Most are close up shots of flowers, although there are also many habit shots. It is beautifully designed and has a very appealing layout. I often find myself randomly flicking through it when I need to look something up, more often than not forgetting what I was actually looking for. It seems to draw you in and keeps you turning from page to page.

For the vast amount of information, I think it is reasonably priced a \$69.95. A similar publication recently put out by the Weed Society of Western Australia includes 1050 weeds, 625 images and costs \$35. There is nothing else out there that is so comprehensive with respect to the number of species included. However, its scope could prove a disadvantage to some users who deal with only a handful of weed species in a particular habitat or region.

As the book says, it is aimed at a wide audience including the general public. I decided to see if it could be easily used as a guide to identifying several common Tasmanian weeds. The 'guinea pig' was my father, not someone with a super keen interest in plants but a keen veggie gardener with a blood-thirty passion for killing boneseed and a general appreciation of the Tasmanian bush.

Ehrharta erecta (panic veldt grass): The flicking through the pages began and the grass was first identified as a *Poa* spp? A 'no' was given and several minutes later a correct identification was made. That was pretty easy. I do wonder if he would have stuck with the first *Poa* identification that he made. I thought to myself that for a true test, I should not offer any assistance with the next two species.

Stellaria media (chickweed): Flicking resumed but this time he started at the dicotyledons. About 12 minutes had passed and we were up to the right family (Caryophyllaceae). He paused over the image of *Cerastium glomeratum* (sticky mouse-ear chickweed) and said 'it looks like this - but it's not sticky'. The search resumed, I thought he would have got it

but he flicked straight on past and continued for another five minutes. I told him he went past it and he went back the page with the *Cerastium* species. After another five or so minutes I got impatient and pointed to the image of *Stellaria media*.

Euphorbia peplus (petty spurge): This took just as long as the chickweed and again he flicked straight past the species. I thought he would get this for sure. Again I got impatient.

About an hour to identify three plants is a long time to spend. And it would have taken longer if I hadn't intervened on all three species. I think it failed this test, and for that matter its supposed usefulness could instead be a cause of great frustration.

I think for the uninitiated, the sheer number of images, whilst nice to look at, are overwhelming. Some of the pages have 12 images to consider and when there are 1600 images to choose from, it is always going to take a while to find the right plant. Not all of the plants are illustrated. If your plant is one of those, then I think you could have a lot of trouble getting the specimen identified. Difficult groups to identify are, as per usual, difficult to distinguish, even using both the images and the descriptions; for example, *Lepidium* species and many of the grasses.

The downfall of this book is that there just isn't any help in narrowing down the search, although I suppose that this will always be a difficult task when dealing with such large numbers of species. A similar type of guide to weeds but one for those in New Zealand (Bruce, R., Popay, I., Champion, P., James, T. & Rahman, A. 2004: *An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds Of New Zealand*, 2nd Ed. New Zealand Plant Protection Society), whilst not as comprehensive, includes a handy guide to flower colour and size. If you have flowers and know the habit of the plant, then you can at least narrow your search down to, at the worst, 20 out of the 330 species included. However, at the scale of the reviewed book it may not have been as helpful as in some cases it may only narrow down to, say, 100–200 species. Ease of use comes down to being familiar with and being able to recognise the key weedy plant families. This is really the only way to allow for easier identification and navigation through this book. I think for the book to be really useful, you need to form a relationship with it. You need to visit it often. You need to go out of your way to take in all the glorious images. As you spend more time with it, the names of the plants you are seeing will start to fall into place.

The book includes many native species. In the introduction it justifies their inclusion on the basis that some are now weed problems outside of their natural range. Others are included because they are toxic to stock or cause some other negative impact. Then there are those that have been included to illustrate their similarity to introduced weedy species. However, I believe that, in some cases, the information on these native species is so brief that it could mislead the reader. For instance, *Calystegia sepium*, although correctly reported to be native, is also listed as naturalised in Tasmania. The book fails to mention that this species is listed as rare on the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act*.

Lythrum salicaria is described as a cosmopolitan species but it does not mention that it is listed as vulnerable in Tasmania. But wait, there are more examples: *Centaurium spicatum* is listed as a native of southern Europe and Asia, but it is not mentioned that it is also considered native in Tasmania and rare as well. A couple of threatened species of *Persicaria* are also treated as weeds, and I am sure if I looked hard enough I would find more in this category. Treating these species as weeds in Tasmania and doing to them what is generally done to weeds would be breaking the law! Their inclusion in the book without proper notes on their conservation status could be portrayed as irresponsible.

There is one last negative aspect. I get the feeling that the Tasmanian *Census of Vascular Plants* was not consulted during the production of this book. One big clue to this is that 24 out of the 36 species which are known in Australia as only occurring in Tasmania are omitted.

Calling this book an identification guide and aiming it at the general public may be over ambitious. Perhaps it could have been titled ‘an annotated illustrated inventory to the weeds of south-eastern Australia’ then I would have no problems. Despite this, I find the book very useful, and there is probably not a day that goes by when I don’t pick it up. I also know of others in the weed fraternity that use it almost as often. It has assisted me to make many identifications but I will always refer to a flora before making a final identification.

I would recommend the book anyone interested in weeds but I would always suggest that having identified your plant, you should seek further information if you intend to kill it.

A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia including the Island Territories by D.L. Jones, Reed New Holland, 2006, full colour, hard cover, 496 pages.

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This beautiful book is an appropriate culmination of the career of Australia’s most prolific orchidologist. Over 45 years of involvement in Australian native orchids, Jones has become Australia’s foremost expert on this beautiful and complex group. *A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia including the Island Territories* (NOA) arose from a rewrite of Jones’s earlier publication, *Native Orchids of Australia* (1988), and was published just prior to his retirement earlier this year.

Jones aims to present a book that can be used by “casual visitors to the bush as well as orchid enthusiasts, conservation workers, environmental consultants and professional botanists” to identify species, and in general, raise the profile and conservation