



WEED OF THE MONTH: JANUARY

Gazania



(photo by R. Boden, <http://www.weeds.org.au/cgi-bin/weedident.cgi?tpl=plant.tpl&ibra=all&card=E18>; sighted 3-12-12)

Gazanias are one of the Houdinis of the plant world: they are great escape artists! Grow them in your garden and the wind will carry an abundance of seeds elsewhere; dump lawn clippings containing gazania seeds and you can also spread the plant. Like boneseed, these are natives of southern Africa; and like boneseed, they can withstand salt-laden winds and grow well in sandy soils. Thus, they have thrived around Cape Jervis. Check out the large clumps of these tough, low-growing plants along the west side of Fleurieu Drive! Gazanias flower in bronze, yellow and orange shades, often with black markings. Don't be taken in by their brightness though: being heavy feeders, they can outcompete native species for nutrients and moisture.

Several coastal communities have classified gazanias as a "red alert" species, and the Southern Fleurieu Coastal Action Plan give them a "priority threat rating" of 8, making them the second highest rated weed in the area, behind bridal creeper.

(See the gazania factsheet from Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management, which can be downloaded from <http://www.amlrnm.sa.gov.au/Publicationsandresources/Factsheetspublications/Pestplants.aspx>)