



## WEED OF THE MONTH: MARCH

### **African Boxthorn**

*(Lycium ferocissimum)*



(Boxthorn tree on anthill at Cape Jervis; close-up of berry, leaf and thorn. Photos E. Cousins)

This is a 'weed of national significance'... meaning it is not just a problem in Cape Jervis, but across the country! Reason: it is persistence personified! A stiff shrub growing over head high, it has many branches, with leaves and sharp spikes clustered along the stems. The red berries of the boxthorn are eaten by birds and foxes; viable seeds are then excreted, and often left in the same area, leading to yet more bushes. The shrub's spikes, growth habit, and efficient spreading of seed, mean boxthorn can grow into an impenetrable thicket, providing a haven for feral animals such as foxes and rabbits, while crowding out native plants.

Boxthorn belongs to the Solanaceae family, as do tomatoes and tobacco.