

Biological control of *Campuloclinium macrocephalum* in South Africa

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Pompom weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum* (Less.) DC., Asteraceae) originates from Central and South America and was first detected in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1962. The weed is now prominent throughout Gauteng province, but also occurs in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Free State provinces. An invasive of grasslands and wetlands, pompom weed produces and spreads via numerous wind dispersed seeds. Studies have highlighted the significant negative impact the weed has on both insect and plant biodiversity. One of the strategies adopted to curb the spread of this grassland invader is that of biological control. Three field surveys have been conducted in Argentina (in co-operation with the United States Department of Agriculture – South American Biological Control Laboratory) and one in Brazil (in co-operation with the Universidade Regionale De Blumenau). Two rust fungi and nine insect species have been found to be associated with the plant within its native range. Of these, one leaf rust fungus (*Puccinia eupatorii* Dietel, *Pucciniales: Pucciniaceae*) and two insect species (a stem-galling thrips, *Liothrips tractabilis* Mound & Pereyra, Thysanoptera: Thripidae, and one flower-feeding moth, *Cochylis campuloclinium* Brown, Lepidoptera: Tortricidae) currently hold the most promise as potential biological control agents. In addition to testing the laboratory host range of these species in South Africa, field host range work is also being conducted in Argentina. Laboratory biology and impact studies are also being conducted. The results of the above studies are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Argentina; *Cochylis campuloclinium*; Gauteng; *Liothrips tractabilis*; *Puccinia eupatorii*

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