***Neolema ogloblini*: exploring a new option for the control of tradescantia (*Tradescantia fluminensis*)**

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The tradescantia leaf beetle (*Neolema ogloblini*) was released in 2011 as a biological control agent for tradescantia (*Tradescantia fluminensis*), one of New Zealand's worst environmental weeds. Tradescantia prevents native forest regeneration by growing over and shading out native seedlings at ground level. To assess *N. ogloblini*'s effectiveness, a glasshouse experiment compared ground level light readings before and after beetle feeding and the response of two native seedlings, kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsum*) and mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*). Feeding damage caused light readings to increase above 5% of full-light, the threshold estimated as necessary for regeneration of native plants by previous research. This resulted in a significant increase in kawakawa seedling height and leaf length. This study suggests that native forest regeneration may benefit from feeding damage to tradescantia caused by *N. ogloblini* in the field.

The search for “white tip” of Californian thistle in New Zealand

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Phoma macrostoma is a cosmopolitan fungus, pathogenic to a wide range of herbaceous and woody plant species, but non-pathogenic to most grasses. Recently, a strain of *P. macrostoma* pathogenic to Californian thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and other broadleaf weeds was registered as a bioherbicide in Canada for use in turf grass and arable cropping systems. This strain causes a condition known as “white tip” disease that is characterised by symptoms of yellow to white chlorosis, commonly referred to as photobleaching. Symptoms characteristic of white tip disease have been observed on Californian thistle in New Zealand, but it is uncertain if the causal agent is *P. macrostoma*. The aim was to determine if strains of *P. macrostoma* that cause white tip disease and are genetically similar to the Canadian bioherbicide strain are present in New Zealand. The presence of such strains would facilitate the registration of this pathogen as a bioherbicide since most safety requirements will have been satisfied by overseas research. People in the agricultural industry are encouraged to look for Californian thistle with white tip symptoms and send samples to AgResearch for identification.