

# PATERSONS CURSE

## Noxious Weed



***Echium* spp.** Patersons curse, also known as Salvation Jane, is a major weed in winter pastures. It was introduced into Australia from the Mediterranean region of Europe in the 1850's.

**DESCRIPTION** – Erect biennial herb growing up to 120 cm high. Rosettes have many hairy egg-shaped leaves up to 30 cm long, are stalked and have distinct branched veins. Stem leaves are also hairy but smaller and narrower than rosette leaves and are almost stem claspings. Leaves on erect stem lanceolate up to 9 cm long. Stems are covered with stiff hairs. Flowers are mostly purple but white, blue and pink are sometimes found. The 2 – 3 cm long flowers are shaped like a curved trumpet. Each flower has five stamens, two of which protrude past the end of the flower tube. The plant has a very stout taproot.

**WHY IS IT A WEED** – It contains liver toxic alkaloids and a high intake will kill grazing animals. It also reduces the pasture value as it out competes pasture plants. It reduces soil fertility. It is highly invasive and is capable of spreading 30,000 seeds per square metre. It invades disturbed natural areas and replaces native vegetation. Some people are allergic to the pollen, the bristles on the plant and possibly honey derived from the plant.