



Weeds Glossary

As used within the Learning for Sustainability Program. These meanings may vary slightly from the technically correct use of the words within the scientific community.

Alternate – When single leaves are placed on the opposite side of the stem to the ones above and below (see Opposite)

Berry – A fleshy fruit containing seeds.

Bulb – A short flat stem topped by swollen leaf-bases that store the plant's food for future growth E.g. an onion (see Corm).

Bulbil – A small bulb that forms on a stem and then drops off to grow into a new plant.

Capsule – A dry receptacle containing seeds which are released when it opens.

Cluster – When a number of flowers, or berries, are grouped together in a dense bunch

Cone – The fruit, usually woody, of a conifer such as Pine. The seeds are produced between the scales of the cone.

Corm – A short swollen stem that stores the plant's food for future growth.

Crown – The top of the main stem of the plant, can be where the main branches or leaves sprout.

Deciduous – The leaves all fall off together in a seasonal cycle. Bark can also be deciduous (see Evergreen).

Declared noxious weeds - These plants can cause environmental or economic harm and have been proclaimed weeds by law. Landholders must control and eradicate these weeds. (There is an information sheet with Victorian list at - http://www.yarranges.vic.gov.au/Files/DPI_NOXIOUS_WEED_LIST.pdf)

Evergreen – Bears leaves all year round, they don't all fall off seasonally (see Deciduous).

Exotic – Brought in from another country

Flower spike – Arrangement of flowers, without stalks, along a stem.

Germinate – When a seed begins to grow into a new plant

Hardwood – A tree that is a flowering plant such as Gums and Wattles.

Indigenous – Native to the area or site, not introduced from outside (see Native).

Layering – When the stems of some plants are in contact with soil they may sprout roots and form a new plant. This is a form of vegetative reproduction (see below) sometimes used by gardeners and is known as layering.

Leaflet – A part of a leaf that is divided into several smaller “mini-leaves”

Native – Occurs naturally in a given area. Sometimes used more broadly to mean native to Victoria, or Australia (see Indigenous).

Node – The part of the stem (often a ‘joint’) where leaves or other stems branch out.

Opposite – When a pair of leaves arise from the stem at the same level but on opposite sides (see Alternate)

Parent tree – The mature tree that produces offspring

Petal – An inner part of a flower surrounding the reproductive structures. They are often white or coloured to attract pollinating insects.

Phyllode – Flattened leaf-stem that does the job of a leaf, as in many wattles.

Pinna(e) – A leaflet; the main division of a divided leaf

Pod – A dry fruit containing several seeds which are released when it splits.
E.g. peas

Rhizome – An underground stem. Some rhizomes also store food for the plant E.g. a potato

Rootlets - Small roots.

Softwood – A tree that bears cones, not flowers.

Stamen – The male part of the flower; includes a filament (stalk) and an anther, the part that produces pollen. Anthers are often yellow.

Stolon – A horizontal stem that grows above the ground from a mature plant and produces roots and new plants from its nodes.

Sucker – A new plant that grows up from the roots of the parent plant (e.g. Poplar). This is a form of vegetative reproduction (see below).

Transpiration – Loss of water to the atmosphere, mostly through the leaves.

Vegetative – Reproducing without flowers or cones, simply by growing new plants from parts or fragments of the original plant. Many weeds reproduce vegetatively, contributing to their success as colonizers and to their nuisance value as weeds.

– The bundle of tissue that helps support a leaf and transports water and nutrients to it and sugar and waste products away to other parts of the plant. The veins are usually visible on the surface (especially underneath) of the leaf and their pattern can help identify the plant.