

Fast-growing weed covering Australian town

20th February, 2016



Photo: AFP / channel 7

A fast-growing weed is causing havoc in a small Australian town. It almost resembles a scene from a horror movie. The weed is called "hairy panic". It is clogging up homes, farmyards and other buildings in the small Australian town of

Wangaratta in the state of Victoria. Hairy panic is a grass that is found in every Australian state. It gets its name from the long hairs along the edges of grass stalks. The dead grass accumulates in large bundles, which are blown across the land by the wind. It has become a real nuisance in Wangaratta because of the large quantity of weed that is collecting in the town. It has reached roof level in some areas. Residents cannot see or reach their garages because of the piles of weed.

Many of the residents have left the town until authorities remove the weed. They are fed up with having to spend several hours a day clearing the piles of dead grass from their driveways and gardens. For some residents, it is a battle to fight through the wall of weeds to get into their home. Local resident Pam Twitchett told Australia's ABC news agency that the weed was physically and mentally draining. Another resident, Jason Perna, spoke about the extent of the problem. He said: "It makes it difficult to get the car out in the morning - if you can find it." He also put the problem into context, saying: "It's a first-world problem. We don't put it on the scale of any of the famine or poverty going on in the world."

Sources: bbc.co.uk / abc.net.au / telegraph.co.uk

Writing

People in first-world countries should look at poor people before they worry. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

weed / havoc / horror movie / hairy / panic / farmyard / bundles / residents / piles / fed up / driveways / gardens / news agency / mentally / first-world problem / famine

True / False

- A horror movie is being filmed in a small Australian town. T / F
- The town is in the Australian state of Victoria. T / F
- The weed gets its name because it looks like human hair. T / F
- The weed is piled as high as the roof in some parts of the town. T / F
- Some people have moved out until the weeds have gone. T / F
- Some residents spend hours a day clearing the weeds. T / F
- A guy called Jason said it was easy to get his car out of the garage. T / F
- Jason said the weed was a developing-world problem. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. havoc | a. alarm |
| 2. resembles | b. tired |
| 3. panic | c. gathers |
| 4. accumulates | d. occurring |
| 5. quantity | e. devastation |
| 6. removed | f. fight |
| 7. fed up | g. scale |
| 8. battle | h. looks like |
| 9. extent | i. amount |
| 10. going on | j. took away |

Discussion – Student A

- Are there any good things about weeds?
- Would you leave your home if you had a similar problem?
- How would you feel about having to fight through a wall of weeds?
- What three adjectives best describe this story, and why?
- What things do you find to be physically and mentally draining?
- What advice do you have for the residents?
- What first-world problems do you have?
- What questions would you like to ask a local resident?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. A fast-growing weed is causing | a. nuisance |
| 2. It is clogging | b. world problem |
| 3. It has become a real | c. of weed |
| 4. It has reached roof | d. up |
| 5. piles | e. wall of weeds |
| 6. They are fed | f. level in some areas |
| 7. fight through the | g. havoc |
| 8. physically and mentally | h. into context |
| 9. He also put the problem | i. up homes |
| 10. It's a first- | j. draining |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why does the article compare the story to a horror movie?
- What do you think it's like to live in the town?
- What problems do weeds cause?
- What are the differences between weeds and flowers?
- What do you think of the name, 'hairy panic'?
- What kind of nuisances are there in your town?
- What do you think residents should do about the weeds?

Spelling

- causing ocvha
- elsreesmb a scene from a horror movie
- gglinocg up homes
- grass uecmllaasuct in large bundles
- It has become a real anceunis
- eidetrnss cannot see
- ttheasuorii remove the weed
- asrveel hours a day
- physically and mentally iirngadn
- the neetxt of the problem
- put the problem into tcnxoet
- nmeifa or poverty

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. a	4. c	5. i
6. j	7. b	8. f	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Barking dogs

You think barking dogs are the biggest nuisance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least annoying of these (and why): spam mail, mosquitos or sales people.

Role B – Spam mail

You think spam mail is the biggest nuisance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least annoying of these (and why): barking dogs are, mosquitos or sales people.

Role C – Mosquitos

You think mosquitos are the biggest nuisance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least annoying of these (and why): spam mail, barking dogs are or sales people.

Role D – Sales people

You think sales people are the biggest nuisance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least annoying of these (and why): spam mail, mosquitos or barking dogs are.

Speaking - Nuisances

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest nuisances at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| • barking dogs | • noisy neighbours |
| • spam mail | • poor wi-fi |
| • mosquitos | • door-to-door salespeople |
| • little brothers | • weeds |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.