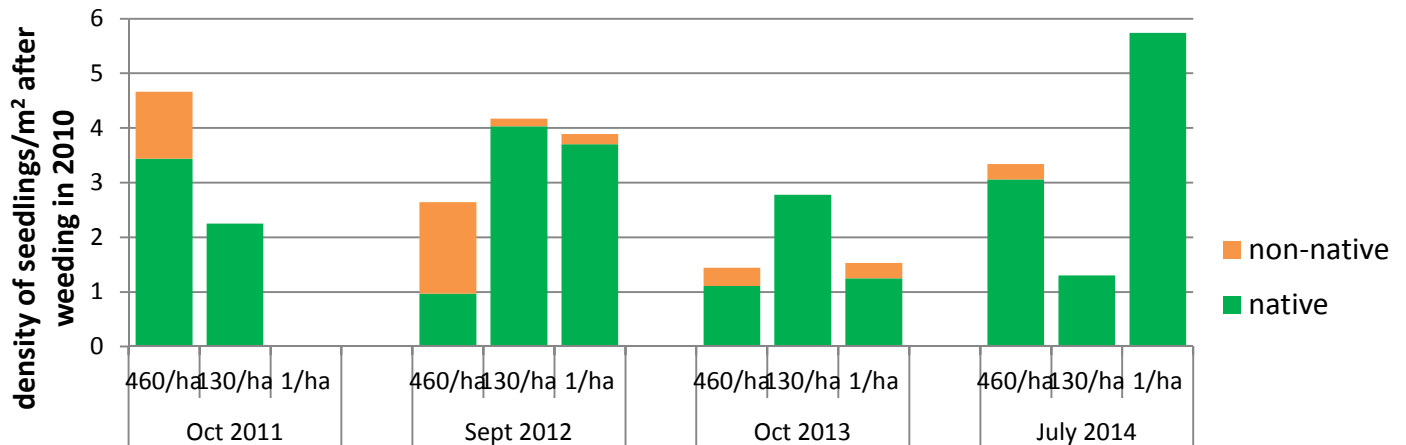


Does native vegetation recover after weeding?

Removing plants – especially large shrubs – can cause a lot of disturbance to the ground. This in turn can encourage seeds in the soil to germinate and grow. We wanted to check that native seedlings were growing in the gaps we left – not just more of the plant species we had removed.

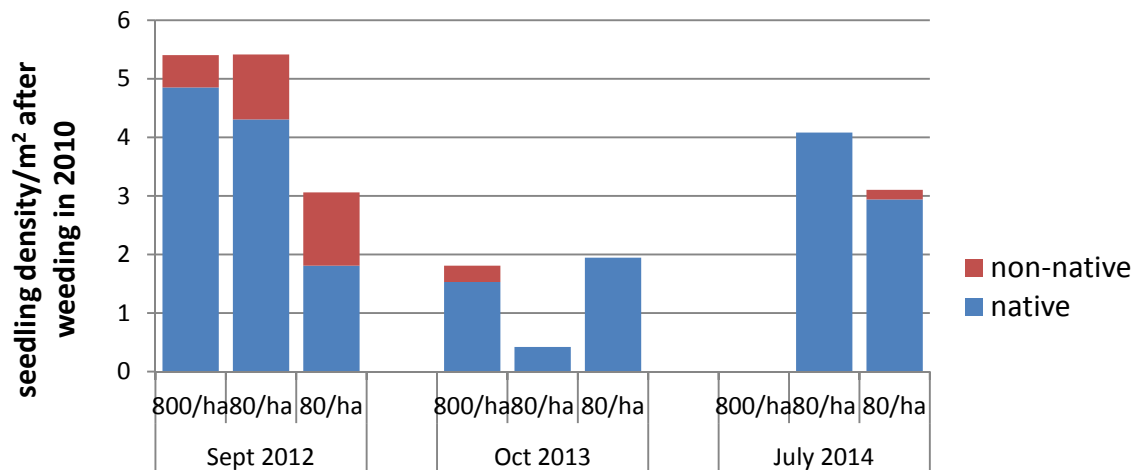
Over four years between 2011 and 2015 we went back to areas that had been weeded in 2010 and counted the woody (tree and shrub) seedlings coming up. *(All these areas are in the floodplain – data from the escarpments is still being collected.)* This is what we found:

In areas where Peking cotoneaster had been removed -



comparison of three different sampling areas (density of cotoneaster before weeding was 460 plants/ha, 130 plants/ha and 1 plant/ha in each area)

In areas where Tartarian honeysuckle had been removed –



comparison of three different sampling areas (density of honeysuckles before weeding was 800 plants/ha, 80 plants/ha and 80 plants/ha in each area)

These data show that manual removal of cotoneaster and honeysuckle does not result in mass germination of cotoneaster and honeysuckle seeds left in the soil, at least in the areas sampled, and that non-native species make up a relatively small percentage of the total number of woody seedlings found.

(Note: European mountain ash (Sorbus aucuparia) seedlings are not included in the above)