

Senecio burchellii

Family: Asteraceae

Species: *Senecio burchellii* DC.

Common Names: molteno disease plant; guanobush (South Africa); flor amarilla (Argentina)

Synonyms: *Senecio incognitos* Cabrera

Bayer Code: SENBU

Description: An erect perennial herb up to 40 cm high, somewhat woody at the base, glabrous or hispid. Leaves linear, minutely toothed, occasionally with some pinnatifid lobes, wider and almost auriculate at the base. Inflorescence loose with relatively few yellow flower heads, 5 mm long with glabrous involucre. Seeds are 2–3 mm long, straight or slightly curved, with bright yellow striations and a white pappus 4–6 mm long.

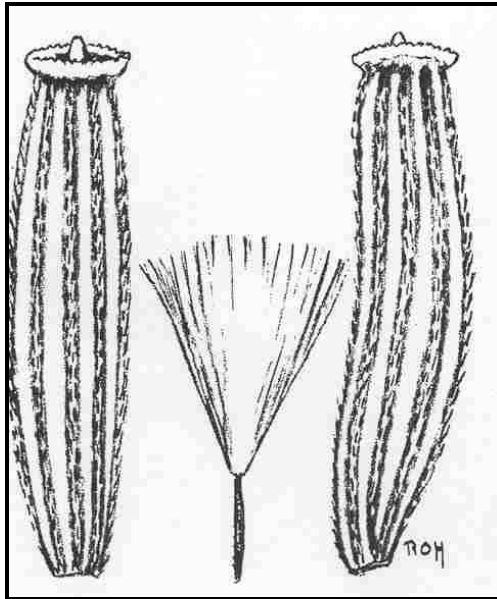


Figure 1. *Senecio burchellii* fruit from Reed (1977)

Distribution: *Senecio burchellii* is native to Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland (NGRP, 2002). It has naturalized in Argentina, Uruguay, and Australia.

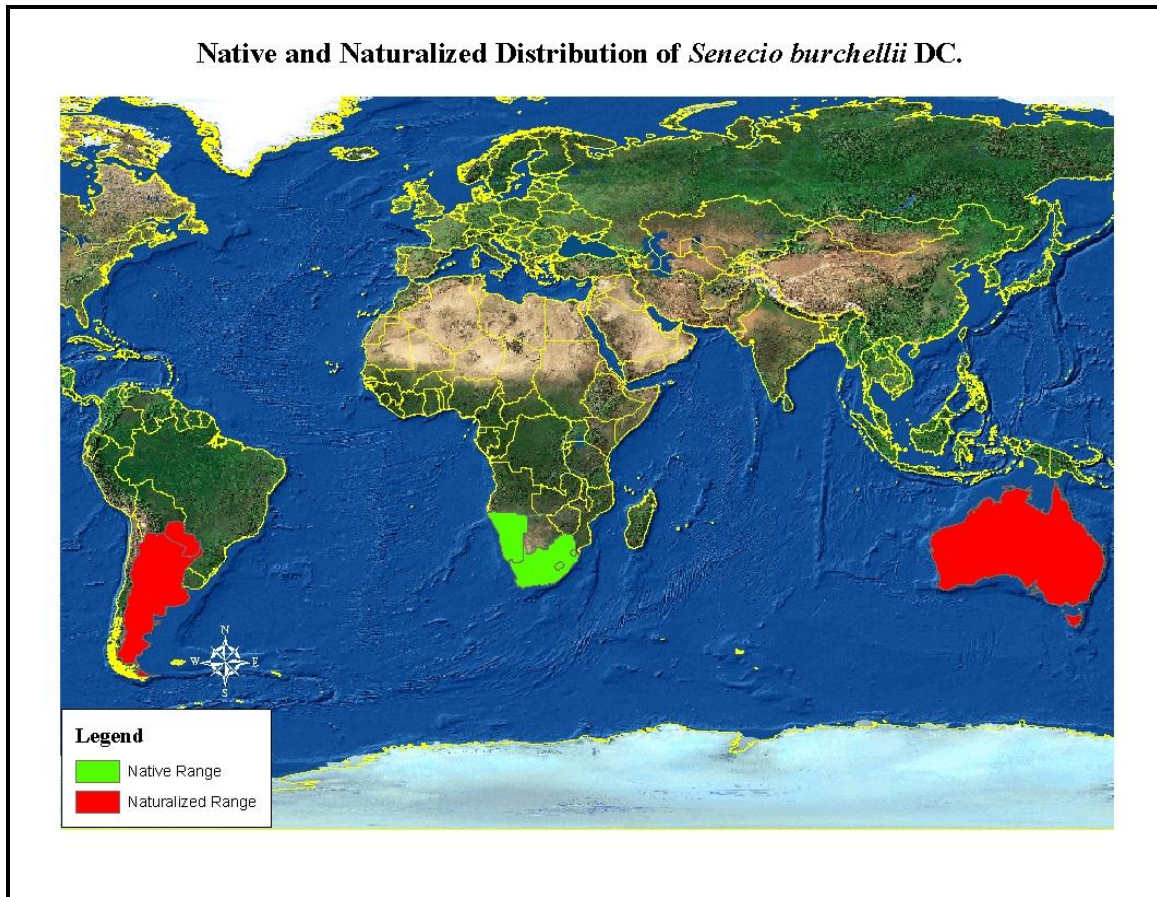


Figure 2. By Glenn Fowler, USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST, 2002 (Fowler, 2002)

Biology and Ecology: *Senecio burchellii* is a perennial weed of both clay and sandy soils, occurring in crops and in natural grassland vegetation. It flowers early in the season.

Possible Pathways to the United States: No information provided

Adverse Impact: As well as being a weed of agriculture and pastures in South Africa and tending to replace other vegetation there (Wells et al., 1986), it is regarded as a serious invasive weed in crops and pastures where naturalized in Argentina (Marzocca et al., 1979). It is furthermore poisonous and poses a threat to livestock. This is a species well adapted to a range of subtropical habitats and could be a serious invader of the United States.

Literature Cited:

Fowler, G. 2002. Distribution Map. USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Center for Plant Health Science and Technology, Raleigh, NC.

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- Reed, C. F. 1977. Economically Important Foreign Weeds: Potential Problems in the United States. Agricultural Research Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, DC. 746 pp.
- Wells, M. J., A. A. Balsinhas, H. Joffe, V. M. Engelbrecht, G. Harding, and C. H. Stirton. 1986. A Catalogue of Problem Plants in Southern Africa. *Memoirs of the Botanical Survey of South Africa* 53:1-658.