

Australian shrub holds key to cleaner wheat and barley crops

Broadacre
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Australian cereal growers are soon expected to benefit from a new pre-emergent herbicide, though it could be considered somewhat of a homecoming.

CALLISTO™ contains the active ingredient Mesotrione, which Syngenta synthesised from the roots of the humble Australian bottle brush, *Callistemon citrinus*, an ornamental plant now popular around the world.

It was a plant biologist that first noticed the absence of weeds growing under one such red bottle brush in his garden.

Taking samples from the soil he was able to isolate five extracts, from which further analysis was able to determine the structure of the active component.

CALLISTO was commercialised for use in the northern hemisphere in 2001 and became an important herbicide in corn production throughout the US and even New Zealand.

Recent trials have demonstrated a fit for CALLISTO in broadacre cereal production, pending registration with the Australian Pest and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

“CALLISTO has demonstrated good crop safety and excellent results as a pre-emergent in wheat and

barley trials,” Syngenta Product Lead for Selective Herbicides Garth Wickson said.

“CALLISTO has a great fit in herbicide programs in cereals, with trials showing excellent results on capeweed, sow thistle, milk thistle, wild radish and fleabane. Due to its activity well into crop establishment, we’re also expecting it to reduce pressure on post-em products, making it a helpful tool in the fight against resistant weeds.”

Garth said this had the potential to make life a lot easier for farmers.

“For many growers post-em applications can be a logistical nightmare in some seasons,” he said.

“It can easily be too wet. Or it can be too dry with moisture stressed weeds less able to take up post-em formulations.”

Growers and advisors will be able to see CALLISTO under trial in 2019 at numerous Syngenta Learning Centre sites.

For more information contact your Syngenta TSM or call Syngenta Customer Service on 1800 022 035.