

Problem and Solution Analysis

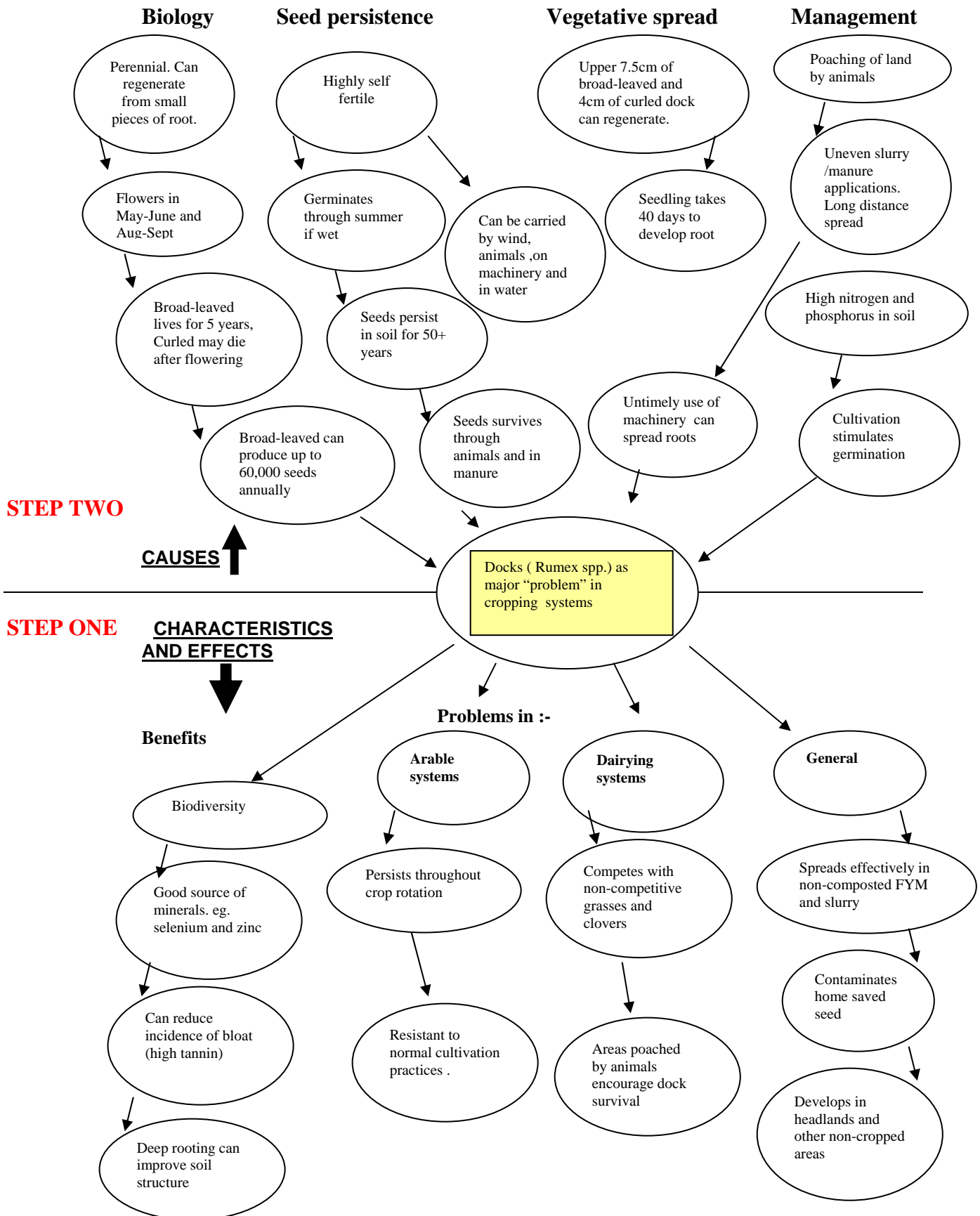
One common method of analysing a problem and searching for solutions in an open, participatory manner is by the use of the five step procedure which is illustrated below. The method is specifically designed to bring all participants into the discussion in an open and fully egalitarian manner. The procedure begins with an analysis of the problem (see page 2). The key “problem” is placed at the centre of a large page which is attached to a vertical surface. All participants sit close around. The exercise is best carried out in small groups with a facilitator recording the outcomes of the discussion directly onto a flipchart.

1. The first step is to explore the effects of the problem (both positive and negative) as perceived by all the participants.
2. The second step is to define the causes (both immediate and primary) of the problem
3. The third step is to place the desired situation in which the problem is solved in the centre of a second page and then to trace the benefits that this new situation might bring about.
4. Step four is to trace the ways in which the “optimum, or best practice” situation might be achieved through actions (sometimes policies) that will lead to the overcoming of primary, secondary and immediate causes of the problem.
5. An additional step would be to add to the diagram the names of the people, institutions or agencies who need to act in particular ways to bring about the desired changes. This would include both strategic and direct actions.

In the example below, the problem of docks (*Rumex obtusifolius* and *Rumex pratensis*) in cropping systems is addressed. Docks are a very common problem in many cropping systems, particularly organic ones, and there has been much research undertaken to address this problem in many different types of systems and contexts. A problem and solution analysis exercise of this kind would normally be undertaken with a range of different stakeholders in order to get as wide a range of opinion and experience into the dialogue as possible. It can also be seen that in the solution page, a number of different actions are required by different people in order to solve the problem. These are farmers, seed cleaners, livestock managers, machinery operators, slurry and FYM managers and possibly others who might unwittingly spread docks seeds.

Acknowledgement : This example is taken from information provided by the DEFRA funded project on Participatory Management of Weeds in Organic Production Systems. See website : www.organicweeds.org.uk

PROBLEM ANALYSIS OF DOCKS IN CROPPING SYSTEMS



SOLUTION ANALYSIS OF DOCKS IN CROPPING SYSTEMS

