

Balsam pear

Momordica charantia



Photo courtesy Bureau of Sugar Experimental Stations

Balsam pear is a native of Malaysia and its cooked fruit is popular with Malaysians and Chinese. It is now widespread in northern Queensland and vigorously competes with crops and native plants on the fringes of rainforest.

Declaration details

Balsam pear is a not declared plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*; however, plants that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

Description and general information

This slender-stemmed, twining-climbing annual vine with tendrils lives about three months and has a strong, unpleasant smell.

Its soft, mid-green leaves are stalked and deeply divided into 5–7 shallowly scalloped lobes, up to 15 cm across. Yellow flowers with five petals, about 2 cm across, develop in leaf axils, each with a small, green, leaf-like bract on the flower stalk.

Fruit is orange-yellow when ripe, 10–20 cm long, ridged and covered with blunt warts. Once mature, it bursts lengthwise and curls back to expose the edible scarlet flesh around its many black seeds.



Queensland Government

Control

Manual control

Hand pull isolated plants and small infestations, making sure that all roots and stem fragments are removed. Plant pieces should either be bagged and taken to the dump or hung up off the ground to prevent reshooting.

Herbicide control

There is only one chemical currently registered for control of balsam pear. This applies to balsam pear up to 100 mm high growing in sugarcane (see Table 1).

There is no herbicide registered for control of balsam pear in situations other than sugarcane in Queensland; however, off-label use permit (Permit No. PER11463) allows the use of various herbicides for the control of environmental weeds in non-agricultural areas, bushland, forests, wetlands, and coastal and adjacent areas.

See Table 1 for treatment options allowed by the permit.

It is important to note that the two treatment options outlined in Table 1 are suggestions only, based on registered controls for similar weeds in non-agricultural areas and the specifications of PER11463. As such, their effectiveness cannot be guaranteed.

Prior to using the chemicals listed under PER11463 you must read or have read to you and understand the conditions of the permit. To obtain a copy of this permit contact your local council weed inspector or visit www.apvma.gov.au

It is a requirement of the permit that all persons using products covered by this off-label permit comply with the details and conditions listed in the permit. Permit number PER11463 expires on 30 June 2014. While the permit may be extended beyond this date, there is no guarantee that it will, so contact your local council weed inspector for the latest information after the expiry date.

Follow up

Monitor treated areas regularly for any new seedlings or regrowth.

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland (call 13 25 23 or visit our website at www.deedi.qld.gov.au).

Table 1. Herbicides registered for the control of balsam pear

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Boom spray (for balsam pear up to 100 mm high growing in sugarcane)	2,4-D (577 g/L)	0.75 L to 1.5 L per hectare		
Spot spray	2,4-D (500 g/L)	4 ml per 1 L water	APVMA permit PER11463 Permit expires 30/06/2014	Read permit carefully prior to use
Spot spray	Fluroxypyr (200 g/L)	1 L per 100 L water	APVMA permit PER11463 Permit expires 30/06/2014	Read permit carefully prior to use

Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

Source: Infopest 2009 + PER11463 + product labels

Fact sheets are available from Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) service centres and our Business Information Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at www.deedi.qld.gov.au to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this fact sheet should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, DEEDI does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.