

Blackberry

Rubus anglocandicans, Rubus fruticosus agg.



As this weed grows in thickets, forming a dense canopy, few plants can successfully compete. The weed invades native bushland, reduces the carrying capacity of grazing land and also provides ideal habitat for rabbits and foxes. Blackberries usually invade disturbed areas, particularly where vegetation has been cleared.

Declaration details

Blackberries are a declared Class 3 plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. Declaration prohibits the supply and sale of Class 3 pest plants. A landowner may be required to remove blackberries by a local government.

Blackberries are a pest in all states except the Northern Territory and have been recognised as a Weed of National Significance due to its invasiveness.



Queensland Government

Description and general information

This woody perennial shrub grows in thickets and consists of arched, reddish-purple stems up to 7 m long, with numerous hooked thorns. Leaves consist of 3 to 5 separate leaflets, are dark green on the upper side, whitish underneath, and usually have hooked thorns on the leaf stalks. Leaves are typically shed in winter.

Flowers are 2 to 3 cm in diameter, white or pink in colour and are formed in clusters at the ends of the branches.

Fruit change colour from green to red to black as it ripens, are succulent and edible, and consist of numerous fleshy segments each containing one seed.

Distribution

In Queensland, Blackberry occurs in the Stanthorpe, Warwick, Killarney and Toowoomba areas.

Native raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius* and *R. rosifolius*) also occur in South East Queensland; these are not declared pests.

Dispersal

Birds and animals (such as foxes) are attracted to the fruit and are responsible for spreading the seeds over wide areas. Seeds are also distributed by water along creeks, gullies and rivers.

The stems or canes are able to send out roots where they touch the ground, forming daughter plants and increasing the size of the infestation. Lateral roots can produce suckers and new plants can grow from root or cane cuttings.



Blackberry fruit



Blackberry leaves



Blackberry infestation



Damage caused by blackberry

Control

Management strategies

Maintenance of dense cover or pasture will prevent blackberry seedlings from establishing.

For established plants, chemical treatment is the most practical control method; however, for isolated plants, physical removal of the crown and root system will be effective.

Mechanical control

Pull out small plants and ensure proper disposal by burning or putting into black plastic bags to rot down.

Slashing, cultivation and burning where appropriate followed by planting of competitive pastures or replanting with native vegetation, will control blackberry.

Biological control

A rust fungus can attack some blackberry species. The fungus will not kill the weed, but will cause defoliation, reducing the plant's aggressiveness and rate of spread. The rust alone cannot be relied upon to give adequate levels of control.

Herbicide control

Before purchasing or using any herbicide always read the label carefully. Exclusion or withholding periods may apply in some situations for certain herbicides. Herbicides registered for blackberry control are listed in Table 1. All herbicides must be applied strictly in accordance with the directions on the label.

Herbicide application is ideal as a follow up to mechanical control (up to 75% of the plant mass may be dead canes) as this will reduce herbicide use and improve plant uptake of herbicide.

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.biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

Table 1 Herbicides approved for the control of blackberry

Herbicide	Situation	Rate	Comments
Glyphosate (360 g/L)	Non-agricultural land, rights of way, irrigation channels/banks	1.0–1.3 L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Apply when plant actively growing.
	Pastures	1.0–1.3L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Spot spray only and ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Glyphosate (835 g/kg) + metsulfuron-methyl (10 g/kg) e.g. Trounce® Brush-pack	Pastures, non-agricultural land, rights of way, forests	1 x 173 g pack/100 L water plus 100 ml wetting agent/100 L water	Apply from flowering until prior to leaf yellowing. Do not apply when bears mature fruit. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Metsulfuron-methyl (63.2 g/kg) + glyphosate (760.5 g/kg) e.g. Cut-out®	Pastures, non-agricultural land, rights of way	95 g sachet/100 L water	Apply when plant actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage, stems and peripheral runners.
Triclopyr 600 g/L e.g. Garlon® 600	Agricultural non-crop areas, forests, pastures, rights of way	170 ml/100 L water	Apply during time of active growth—spring to autumn. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L e.g. Grazon DS	Non-crop, non-agricultural land, rights of way, pastures	0.35–0.5 L/100 L water	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Metsulfuron-methyl (600 g/kg) e.g. Brush-off®	Pastures, rights of way	10 g/100 L water, plus 100 ml wetting agent/100 L water	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems
Triclopyr (200 g/L) + picloram (100 g/L) e.g. Tordon® DS	Agricultural non-crop areas, forests, pastures, rights of way	0.5 L/100 L water plus wetter	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Always add an adjuvant.

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

Fact sheets are available from Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) service centres and our Customer Service Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at www.biosecurity.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.