

Invasive plants and animals

Cat's claw creeper

Macfadyena unguis-cati



The problem

Cat's claw creeper is a native of tropical America, and is an aggressive climber which was used as an ornamental in older-style Queensland gardens. This vine has the ability to completely smother native vegetation, even growing up over trees, and many bushland areas already have serious infestations of this weed. The vine has a vigorous root and tuber system, and this adds to the difficulties of controlling the weed.

Description

Cat's claw creeper is a vine with large, bright yellow bell shaped flowers in spring. Its leaves each have two leaflets, with a three clawed tendril (the cat's claw) growing between them. The vine bears very long, narrow and flat pods containing many seeds.

Management strategies

Use a pruning saw, machete or brush hook to cut all leads/stems up the trees. All above the cut will die, but be regrowth will occur from the underground tubers. Digging the tubers out is not practical in most cases. Don't allow the regrowth to reach host tree's foliage. If they get away you will have to recut them. The regrowth is best treated with a foliar spray.

Glyphosate 360 mixed at a rate of 83 mls to each litre of water can be applied in a cut stump method. It is best done in pairs. First, cut the lead as close to the ground as possible and spray/paint the chemical on.

The glyphosate must be applied within 15 seconds of cutting while the sap is running to take the poison down into the roots and tubers. If you miss the 15-second mark, then cut lower, and try again.

Because of the multitude of tubers the herbicide tends to knock them down one at a time with new regrowth coming from the next tuber. Be prepared to continue control over the next five years.

Declaration details

Cat's claw creeper is a declared Class 3 plant under *the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. The Act prohibits the supply or sale of Class 3 plants and may require their removal from environmentally significant areas.

Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.

TABLE 1 – CHEMICAL CONTROL OPTIONS OF CAT'S CLAW CREEPER

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Cut stump	360 g/L glyphosate	83 mL/L water	PERMIT 5762	Ensure vines are actively growing at time of treatment and not under stress of drought, waterlogging or cold. Additional comments on PERMIT 5762
	500 g/L dicamba	33 mL/L water		
Foliar application	360 g/L glyphosate	10 mL/L water		
	500 g/L dicamba	4 mL/L water		
Basal bark spray	200 g/L fluroxypyr e.g. Starane 200	35 mL/L diesel/kerosene	PERMIT 7485	

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