

# Currant bush

Blackberry, burrum bush or conkberry

*Carissa ovata* and *Carissa lanceolata*



Currant bush reduces pasture production, which can be particularly serious where currant bush covers an extensive area. Currant bush is drought tolerant and not grazed as much as the pasture species.

This gives it an advantage in dry times or in overgrazed situations.

In some areas, currant bush is seen as a useful browse plant. It is palatable to stock and has a moderate

nutritional value. It provides drought fodder and reduces soil erosion. The small thickets also offer good habitats for wild animals and birds.

## Declaration details

Currant bush is not a declared plant under Queensland legislation. A local government may declare currant bush under its own local law.



Queensland Government

## Description and general information

Currant bush is a sprawling native shrub with thorny stems. Currant bush can reach 3 m high, but is usually 1–2 m, branching out to several metres in diameter, and often forming dense, low thickets.

The leaves are leathery, grow opposite one another on the stem, are 2–4 cm long and either narrow (*C. lanceolata*) or oval-shaped (*C. ovata*).

The flowers are small and white, tube-shaped with pointed lobes at the end, and highly scented. The flowers develop into oval-shaped berries, 5–9 mm long, which become soft and black when mature and contain 1–2 seeds.

## Habitat and distribution

Currant bush is widespread throughout sub-coastal and semi-arid Queensland. It prefers well-drained soils and in normal conditions does not spread quickly. However, when ground cover is significantly reduced, as from drought, heavy grazing pressure or clearing, currant bush will rapidly invade.

## Control

### Mechanical control

Mechanical control of currant bush is best achieved by cutter bars, blade ploughs, or combined pulling, seeding, and follow-up burning. These methods are expensive.

Bulldozing seems to encourage currant bush growth. It fails to kill the roots, and by clearing the ground cover, it creates conditions that favour the spread of the plant.

### Fire

Fire will kill currant bush if the fire is hot enough. If practical, currant bush areas can be fenced off from stock until there is sufficient grass and other matter to carry a very hot fire.

### Herbicide control

Chemical control may be used alone or as a follow-up to mechanical control (see Table 1).

### 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](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)).

**Table 1 Herbicides registered for the control of currant bush**

Situation	Herbicide active ingredient	Rate	Comments
Brigalow regrowth and associated problem woody weeds on grazing land	tebuthiron 200 g/kg (e.g. Graslan®)	Hand application only: 7.5 kg/ha or 1 g/m <sup>2</sup>	Will kill native trees. Do not use near waterways
	tebuthiron 200 g/kg (e.g. Graslan® Aerial)	Aerial application: 7.5–15 kg/ha	7.5 kg for lighter duplex soils 10 kg for medium density re-growth on light clay soils 12.5 kg and above for heavy density re-growth on heavy acidic clays  Aerial application to be undertaken in accordance with Graslan Aerial Herbicide Code of Practice 2006

### Notes:

Recording of herbicide usage is required on grazing properties over 2000 ha in Great Barrier Reef catchments. Use on native vegetation must be done in accordance with the *Vegetation Management Act 2000* in Queensland.

**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](http://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.