

Invasive plants and animals

## Giant bramble

*Rubus alceifolius*



### Description

Giant bramble is a vigorous, scrambling, perennial shrub, capable of covering other plants and forming dense thickets. It readily invades pastures, roadsides, and other cleared areas in the Wet Tropics of Queensland. Giant bramble is often confused with a native bramble, commonly called 'wild raspberry' which is similar but has a differently shaped leaf.

The stems of Giant bramble become thick canes, up to 5m long, covered with a felt of brown hairs and hooked prickles. They are erect at first then arch and scramble over other plants, taking root where they reach the ground and producing daughter plants. The leaves are large and alternate, green above and velvety, brown below, due to a dense



covering of hairs. There is a deep notch at the base of each leaf and about seven shallow, but finely serrated lobes. The flowers are white, in clusters at the ends of short secondary canes, and the fruit is an edible 'berry' which is red when ripe.

## Life cycle

Seeds germinate at any time of the year providing moisture is available but mainly in December – January. Flowers are produced in July, developing on short secondary canes which are produced in the second year of the plants growth. Fruits ripen in September – October with new primary canes developing from the rootstock as this occurs.

## The problem

The plant forms dense, impenetrable thickets, due to its ability to grow vegetatively and its barbed canes. It readily invades developing pastures, particularly on newly cleared land, which reduces pasture productivity and access to water. It will encroach onto roadways, hindering access to useful areas, and spread into disturbed rainforest areas.

## Distribution and habitat

Giant bramble is a native of South-east Asia - when and why it was introduced into Australia is not known. In Queensland it is found in the Wet Tropics of north-east Queensland, between Tully and Cairns, mainly in the lowlands and foothills, and on the wet, eastern edge of the Atherton Tablelands. It inhabits wet gullies, creekbanks, the perimeter of rainforest areas and along logging tracks and roadsides.

## Dispersal

Spread of Giant bramble occurs when birds and animals eat the succulent fruit and void the seed through their dropping. Localised spread, and an increase in density, occurs when canes take root and produce daughter plants.



## Declaration details

Giant bramble is not declared 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.

## Control

### Chemical control

Herbicide can be used by applying as an overall spray during the early flowering period, making sure that the leaves and stems are thoroughly wetted. Penetration of thick clumps may be difficult and respraying may be required. One herbicide is currently registered for Giant bramble and is listed in the table below.

### Mechanical control

Regular slashing will hinder growth, and will give varying degrees of control if the plants are slashed before they are able to seed. Cultivating can be used as control technique with varying degrees of success.

## Further information

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



TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF GIANT BRAMBLE

Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Grazon DS picloram/triclopyr	1:200 parts water + wetting agent	overall spray when actively growing

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