

Monday 25 June 2018

AFRICAN BOXTHORN – INSPECTION PROGRAM

Botanical Name: Lycium feroissimum

Inspection Program: Narrandera Shire Council will be conducting inspections in accordance with Council's Weeds Policy. Residents are advised that African Boxthorn is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) and is also regulated with a **General Biosecurity duty**.

Legal requirements: All plants are regulated with a **general biosecurity duty** to prevent, eliminate or minimise any biosecurity risk they may pose. Any person who deals with any plant, who knows (or ought to know) of any biosecurity risk, has a duty to ensure the risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised, so far as reasonably practicable. African Boxthorn must not be imported into the state or sold.

Impact: African boxthorn is an aggressive invader of pastures, roadsides, reserves, remnant bushland and waterways. It forms an impenetrable, spiny thicket that inhibits the movement of stock and provides a haven for feral animals. Many insects, including fruit fly, the common house fly and the tomato fly, breed in the fruit of this weed.

Description: African boxthorn is an erect perennial shrub. It can grow up to 5 m high and 3 m across but usually reaches only 2 or 3 m in height. It is characterised by its woody, thorny growth. The plant is drought resistant and in times of moisture stress can shed its leaves, making it look dead. In some locations plants can be deciduous, losing their leaves in winter. The berries contain 35 to 70 seeds and are orange-red when ripe.

Control Methods

Mechanical removal: The most cost effective way of controlling mature thickets is to physically remove the top growth and as many of the roots as possible. The removed material should then be burnt. Removal of the roots is much easier and more effective when the soil is moist. It is important to destroy all plant material after physical removal because: dead branches still pose a problem because of their thorns and the fact that they can harbour vermin; unripened fruit on cut branches can still ripen and produce seed; and broken root fragments may sucker and produce new growth.

Chemical control: Only a registered herbicide used according to the directions on the label should be used to control this weed. Herbicides can be applied to African boxthorn in many different ways. At times, the plant will lose its leaves and appear dead after the application of a herbicide, but later new leaves appear and the plant appears to recover. This cycle may happen several times before the plant eventually dies. The most appropriate form of herbicide application will depend on the location, size and maturity of the infestation.

Foliar spray: Foliar spraying is the most commonly used method of control. Its effectiveness depends on adequate soil moisture to allow active growth of the bush. For effective control by this application method, spray the whole bush thoroughly during a time when the plant is actively growing. This will vary depending on the location but is generally during spring after rain. For large bushes it is very costly and difficult to obtain good coverage with the herbicide. It may be more cost effective to bulldoze thickets of large bushes and spray the regrowth. The uptake of foliar-applied

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herbicides is dependent on total leaf area, so foliar spraying should not be done until the regrowth is at least 50 cm high (approximately 18 months old). For effective results, do not treat infestations during hot, dry, summer periods or when the plant is stressed from drought, water logging or cold.

Cut stump treatment: This technique is also appropriate for small infestations in environmentally sensitive locations. It is most suitable for large plants with stem diameters greater than 5 cm. Cut each stem off 15 cm above the soil surface. Liberally apply a herbicide registered for this activity to the cut surface within 30 seconds of the cut being made. This can be done by paintbrush or by spraying.

If the herbicide is not applied immediately, the plant will heal the cut, the chemical will not be translocated through the plant, and control will not be effective.

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Figure 1: Mature fruit of African Boxthorn. (NSW DPI)



Figure 2: Mature African Boxthorn (NSW DPI)

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Figure 3: Fruit and plant in full leaf. (NSW DPI)

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| Precis or Summary: African Boxthorn – Inspection Program | | | |
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