



Narrabri Shire Council Management Plan for Rhus Tree

(Toxicodendron succedaneum)

Plan No: RT01/2006

The Rhus Tree (*Toxicodendron succedaneum*) is widely grown for its spectacular autumn foliage; however it is an allergenic plant that causes painful and dangerous allergic reactions in many people. Its sap causes severe dermatitis and all parts of the plant are dangerous. No part of the plant should be burnt as the smoke carries toxic oil of the sap which is particularly dangerous in this form.

The Rhus Tree is a small deciduous tree up to 8m tall with brilliantly coloured autumn foliage that reproduces seeds and suckers. Leaves are bright green above, grayish below during the summer months, changing to brilliant scarlet and crimson in autumn before shedding. Flowers are creamy white, formed in spring and summer and found in groups among new seasons leaves at the end of branchlets. The fruit is a papery berry when ripe, hanging in groups from branches during autumn and winter and shedding the following spring.

In the Narrabri Shire, the Rhus Tree is gazetted as a Class 4 noxious weed under Schedule 4 of Weed Control Order 19 (Order 19) made pursuant to section 7 and 8 of the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* (the Act) as amended in 2005. Class 4 noxious weeds are plants that pose a threat to primary production, the environment or human health, are widely distributed in an area to which the order applies and are likely to spread in the area or to another area.

Order 19 also provides that the growth and spread of this plant must be controlled according to the measures specified in a management plan published by the Local Control Authority (LCA). To comply with Order 19, the Rhus Tree must be managed in such a way as to minimise the negative impact of the weed on the economy, community or the environment of NSW.

CONTROL MEASURES

The presence of the Rhus Tree should be notified to the Narrabri Shire Council (NSC) within seven (7) days of detection of the infestation, and it must be continuously suppressed and destroyed.

Rhus Tree should be removed with extreme caution. Contact with the sap is especially dangerous and the risk of contact can be minimized by waiting until after the leaves have fallen, mid-winter, before attempting to remove the plant. Owners/occupiers may use either or both of the following control methods:

- a. **Mechanical:** small trees below 2m in height can be pulled or dug out and disposed of at the garbage tip.
- b. **Chemical:** shrubs or trees can be controlled by cutting them down and painting the stump immediately with a herbicide solution, which effectively kills the roots and prevents regrowth. Stem injection with undiluted chemical is also effective.

NSC Weeds Officers will inspect private and crown land for infestations of the Rhus Tree. NSC will also undertake control work with allocated funds on Crown Land and land for which it has responsibility.

Enforcement through court action is an LCA option for non-compliance with Section 12 of the Act by the owner/occupier of private land.

The plan will remain in force until 1 March 2011 and Council may review, vary or revoke this plan in accordance with the Act.

Further information about this plan can be obtained from NSC by phone (02) 6799 6702, fax (02) 6762 4301 or by mail to PO Box 261, Narrabri NSW 2390.

Adopted: 21 November 2006

Revision Date: 1 March 2011

Authorised:
Acting General Manager