



Inverell Shire Council

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL UNIT

Please address all correspondence to the General Manager, Inverell Shire Council,
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St John's wort

Arguably one of our most serious noxious weeds, St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a threat to all grazing properties in northern New South Wales.

One plant of St John's wort can produce 30,000 seeds, and these can remain viable in the ground for more than 10 years. The sticky seeds are easily spread by



livestock, feral animals, humans, motor vehicles, machinery and water. Movement of stock from an infested area is a major cause of spread.

Unless you know exactly where to look, St John's wort is very hard to locate in the paddock until the plants commence flowering. This is when treatment becomes urgent because the plants can set seed within a week if conditions are very dry, or up to three weeks in a wet season. Flowering usually extends from November to April, again, depending on rainfall. During this entire period, regular surveillance and follow-up treatment is necessary to ensure all plants are treated before they set seed. Every mature plant left untreated guarantees hundreds of seeds for next season!



EFFECT ON ANIMALS?

St John's wort contains the toxin, hypericum. Over-exposure to St John's wort causes health problems for animals, particularly horses, sheep and cattle. Livestock grazing in a paddock containing a heavy infestation of flowering St John's wort can, on a sunny day, develop clinical signs of hypericum poisoning within five hours. Later symptoms



include agitation, head-rubbing, hind limb weakness, panting - leading eventually to raw, weeping areas of skin (ref. NSW DPI Primefact 694). The two photos here show these same effects on a horse that had been grazing in a paddock of heavy St John's wort for about five days. The white parts on animals are mostly affected.



[Horse photos - courtesy Ian Davidson, Inverell]

MORE INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WEEDS OFFICER:

Les Tanner 02 6728 8284 - mobile 0427 241 806

Phil Sutton 02 6728 8244 - mobile 0418 446 068

OR check out Council's website on www.inverell.nsw.gov.au, Environmental Services section

ST JOHN'S WORT (continued)

IDENTIFICATION

Apart from the distinctive flowers (see front page), a positive way to identify St John's wort is by examination of the leaves. Hold a leaf up to the light and you should see what look like tiny pin holes through every leaf - as shown in this close-up photograph of a tiny, single leaf. These are the hypericum oil glands.

LEGAL STATUS:

ST JOHN'S WORT IS A CONTROL CLASS 3 NOXIOUS WEED: THE PLANT MUST BE CONTINUOUSLY SUPPRESSED AND DESTROYED.

MORE INFORMATION:

More information is available on the Industry & Investment NSW Weeds Sub-Program website, see I&I NSW's *Primefact 694*. Also recommended is "*Noxious Plants of Australia*", by Parsons and Cuthbertson [Inkata Press].

CONTROL METHODS

Non-Chemical Options: Perennial pastures and grazing management will offer some control (for details see NSW DPI and/or Weeds CRC websites referred to above). Converting an infested area to a well-worked cultivation paddock (where appropriate and permissible) is probably the only effective way to eradicate large areas of St John's wort!

Chemical options for St John's wort: According to NSW DPI's excellent booklet "*Noxious and Environmental Weed Control Handbook 4th Edition*", treatments include:



Chemical options	Rate: Spot/Boom	Comments
Triclopyr 600 g/L + picloram 600 g/L eg Grazon DS®	500 ml in 100 L of water Boom rate: 2.0 - 4.0 L per hectare:	Late spring to early summer, during flowering to early seed set. Boom: Apply November to January, use higher rate on dense infestations.
Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L + Aminopyralid 8 g/L Grazon Extra®	500 ml in 100 L of water Boom rate: 2.0 - 4.0 L per hectare:	Foliar application from late spring to early summer, during flowering to early seed set. Apply November to January, use higher rate on dense infestations.
Fluroxypyr 200 g/L eg Starane®	500 mL per 100 L water 3.0 L/ha	Spring to mid summer application. Boom appln. Observe withholding period.
Fluroxypyr 333 g/L Starane Advanced®	300 mL per 100 L water 1.8 L/ha	Foliar application from flowering to seed set. Observe withholding period. Observe withholding period.
Fluroxypyr 333 g/L eg Starane Advanced®	1.8 L/ha	Apply from bud to full bloom. Some regrowth will occur. Treat regrowth the following season for best results. Use at least 200 L water/ha.
Glyphosate 360 g/L Various trade names	3.0 L per hectare	Apply November to May, flowering to post flowering. (Suitable isolated plants only)
2,4-D ester 600 g/L Various trade names	3.7 to 5.3 L per hectare	For use in grass pastures, before flowering, when the plants are less than 40 cm high.
Metsulfuron methyl 600 g/L eg Brushoff® + glyphosate 360 g/L various trade names	10 g metsulfuron methyl PLUS 200 ml glyphosate per 100 L water	Spray to wet, but not to cause run-off.

IMPORTANT: USE OF PESTICIDES - ALWAYS READ THE LABEL Pesticides must only be used for the purpose for which they are registered and must not be used in any other situation or in any manner contrary to the directions on the label. Never use a herbicide in any way contrary to the label recommendations.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained herein is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Inverell Shire Council or the user's independent adviser. (LRT 2/12/10)

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