Inverell Shire Council

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL UNIT

Please address all correspondence to the General Manager, Inverell Shire Council, 144 Otho Street, Inverell, NSW 2360 – Telephone 02 6728 8288 Fax 02 6728 8277
Email council@inverell.nsw.gov.au website www.inverell.nsw.gov.au

Blue Heliotrope

Blue heliotrope (*Heliotropium amplexicaule* Vahl*)* is a native plant of South America. It is hardy and drought-tolerant. It's not new to the north west, but it is **a problem weed and certainly on the increase in many areas**.

The plant re-generates from rootstock and (sticky) seeds: it is easily spread through soil disturbances (including cultivation), slashing, water and animal movements. It has allelopathic qualitities, enabling it to take over the ground and eventually displace most other plants (*as it is doing in the photo, right*).

HOW TO IDENTIFY BLUE HELIOTROPE

The plant lies dormant throughout winter, emerging in the spring as a dense, low-growing plant covered in "attractive" flowers. At this stage blue heliotrope emits an unpleasant odour, offensive to most people but especially hay fever sufferers.

Blue heliotrope flowers are purple or lilac, with a yellow centre. One positive identification feature is the characteristic bend in that part of the plant holding the flowers - as indicated in the photo, below. Some people liken the shape to that of a "sea-horse".

EFFECT ON ANIMALS?

Blue heliotrope is poisonous to livestock. Most animals try to avoid the unpalatable plants, bit it is often consumed with other feed. Heliotrope causes liver damage and reduced productivity. Horses, pigs, cattle, sheep and goats can all be affected (in that order of susceptibility).

As with all problem plants the risk to animals is higher when the animals are put into a new paddock. In these situations, stressed and disorientated animals will often try a variety of plants that they would not normally eat.

LEGAL STATUS

Blue heliotrope is not currently listed as a declared NOXIOUS WEED within the Shire of Inverell. However, it is a serious weed, and on the increase. All landholders need to be aware of its potential and are urged to keep this undesirable plant off their properties**.**

MORE INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WEEDS OFFICER:

Les Tanner 02 6728 8284 - mobile 0427 241 806	Phil Sutton 02 6728 8244 - 0418 446 068
OR check out Council's website on www.inverell.nsw.gov.au, Environmental Services section	

BLUE HELIOTROPE (continued)

CONTROL METHODS

Biological: early days yet but NSW DPI's Weed Biological Control Unit in collaboration with CSIRO Canberra has released a biological agent for control of blue heliotrope. The beetles have been showing promise at some release sites in northwest New South Wales. This work is continuing...

According to NSW DPI's excellent booklet *"Noxious and Environmental Weed Control Handbook 3rd Edition"*:

Non-Chemical Options: Dig out single plants. Improve pastures with vigorous perennial species. Ploughing is not an option because (a) the plant grows from root pieces and (b) dormant seeds will be brought to life.

Chemical Options:

Chemical	Rate	Comments
Triclopyr 300 g/L + **picloram** 100 g/L eg Grazon DS®	500 ml per 100 L water	Apply at flowering in a minimum spray volume of 1250 L/Ha.
Dicamba 500 g/L eg Kamba M®	130 mL per 15 L water 600 mL per 100 L water 8.8 L per hectare	Knapsack spray. High volume spot spray. Boom spray. Apply to young, actively growing plants
2,4-D 300 g/L + **picloram** 75 g/L eg Tordon® 75-D	1.0 L per 100L water	Grass pastures only. Spot spray. Apply to young, actively growing plants.
Fluroxypyr 200 g/L eg Starane®	1.0 L per 100 L water	Spot spray. Apply during flowering.
Tebuthiuron 200 g/L eg Graslan®	0.5 g per square metre	**DO NOT use within 30 m of trees, DO NOT apply to areas greater than 0.5 hectares in size**
Metsulfuron methyl 600 g/L Various trade names eg Brushoff®	10 g per 100 L of water	Plus 1.0% surfactant. Spot spray. Apply when plants are actively growing spring to autumn. See PER 8444.
Glyphosate 360 g/L Various trade names	1.0 L per 100 L water 2.0 L per hectare	High volume spot spray. Actively growing plants, late spring to autumn at commencement of flowering and before seed set.
Glyphosate 450 g/L Various trade names	1.6 - 2.0 L per hectare	**DO NOT apply to stressed plants**. Permit 8443.

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 22/11/07)

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