

Hunter Region Priority Weed

Green cestrum

Impacts significantly on productivity and the natural environment

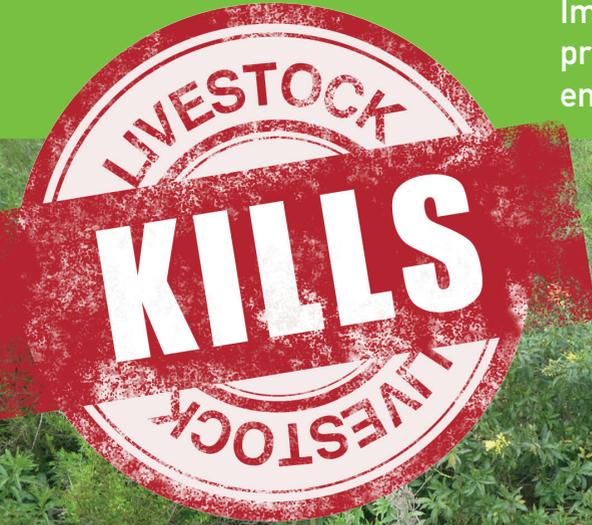


Photo: P. Sykes

Management guide



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) to contain the spread of weeds.

“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”

The Regional priority for Green Cestrum is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts. In order to achieve this Land Managers are asked to:

Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land. Mitigate spread of the weed from their land. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.

For further information contact your local Weeds Officer via [Hunter Regional Weeds](#) or visit [NSW WeedWise](#).

Impacts

Green cestrum is a serious weed in all parts of the Hunter Region and can impact significantly on productivity and the natural environment:

- Toxic to animals including cattle, sheep, horse, pigs, poultry, domestic pets and humans.
- All parts are poisonous. Livestock poisoning usually occurs when other feed is scarce.
- Can taint animal products, such as milk.
- A vigorous plant that can outcompete other vegetation. It grows along creeks and rivers, disturbed sites, rail corridors, urban gardens and suburban areas. Found in rural land, bushland and within towns and cities.
- Green cestrum is usually spread by birds eating the berries and can be spread by water.
- It can sucker and grow from root pieces left in the soil. Seeds can lie dormant for many years.
- Bushes that have been cut down or killed with herbicide will retain poison in their leaves, branches and berries. Recently sprayed wilting plants are more palatable than fresh healthy plants and, potentially, can cause more deaths.
- Livestock should be removed from any paddock where a Green cestrum control program is under way and not returned until the leaf material has disintegrated or been removed.
- Competes with native vegetation, thus reducing biodiversity.

Management

- To mitigate the spread, landholders must not allow plants to set seed. This is best achieved by destroying the plant.
- Herbicides are often the most effective and economical method of control.
- It can be cut down, dug up or pushed out by mechanical equipment. All the yellow roots must be removed and destroyed to prevent regrowth. The roots can be burnt. This method of control may cause significant ground disturbance which may cause other issues such as erosion, particularly on the banks of waterways. A controlled activity permit from NSW Water is required where the bed or bank is disturbed.
- It can have vigorous regrowth after initial treatment. Monitor for regrowth. New infestations should be destroyed before they flower and produce berries.
- Total eradication of Green cestrum requires a combination of control techniques and frequent follow-up work.
- After removal, a vigorous pasture or appropriate native species should be established to compete with any regrowth.

Identification



The flowers are normally yellow, but may have a green tinge. Flowers grow in clusters at the end of branches. The flowers produce an unpleasant perfume during the day, but can smell quite sweet in the evening. Individual flowers are 20–25 mm long, and are trumpet-shaped. *Photo: P. Sykes*

The shiny-green leaves are 20–30 mm wide and 80–100 mm long. They have smooth edges, are pointed at each end and are arranged alternately along the branch. The leaves produce a pungent, foul smell when crushed. *Photo: P. Sykes*



Leaves can take on a purplish tinge during winter. Clusters of shiny, black, egg-shaped berries 7–10 mm long are produced during summer and autumn. The berries each contain several wrinkled seeds which are about 3–5 mm long. The dark pulp of the berries will stain fingers a purple colour if they are squashed. Berries remaining on the bush during winter will shrivel and become dull black or grey.



Photo: P. Sykes



Control regrowth before flower and seed form. *Photo: P. Sykes*



Green cestrum is a medium-sized perennial shrub growing 2–3 m. It usually has many light-green, brittle stems. Commonly found along waterways, fence lines, under trees and power lines, in gardens, and generally anywhere birds roost. Often grows among other plants. *Photo: G. Wisemantel*

Management Calendar

The calendar below outlines the management approach for a typical year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Growth stage	Germination with good moisture.		Primary germination.						Germination with good moisture.			
	May become dormant in hot weather.		Rapid Growth.					Rapid Growth.				
	Berries produced, held over winter.									Flowering.		
Action				Control young plants by manual removal, spot spraying, cut and paint.					Control larger plants before or at flowering by manual removal, cut stump, basal bark or spot spraying.			

Recommended control options may vary according to your area. There are experienced professional Weeds Officers based in each Local Government Area who have local knowledge and can provide expert advice for your weed management situation. Contact your expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or at Hunter Regional Weeds.

Herbicide control options for all areas in NSW, including current herbicide registrations, are available for Green cestrum at <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/65>.

Remember that all herbicide must be used and handled in accordance with the label or permit.

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Greencestrum>



Get the WeedWise app

Further information

For further information on how to meet your General Biosecurity Duty on your property, your best source is the expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or via Hunter Regional Weeds.

Contact Hunter Regional Weeds

www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au

Hunter Local Land Services

www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au

NSW Weed Wise

www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

