



Weed Management Information

St John's wort

Botanical name: *Hypericum perforatum*

Weed Class: Class 3 noxious weed

Legal requirements: The plant must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed.

Control options

Integrated management strategies are required to effectively control St John's wort. Lightly infested areas should be cleaned up as soon as possible to prevent spread. Extensive infestations are best quarantined and tackled progressively as part of a pasture improvement program, in conjunction with other control techniques.

Prevention: Isolated plants are readily identified and conspicuous when in flower and should be removed.

Cultivation: Cultivation is not effective unless followed by the sowing of competitive pasture.

Pasture management: Seek advice from your local agronomist about the most effective pasture species to select when managing pastures to minimise emergence of St John's wort. Soil testing should be carried out to help determine the most appropriate fertiliser strategy. Advice on superphosphate application and choice of effective sub-clover species should be sought from your agronomist.

Chemical control: Use a herbicide that is registered for use on St John's wort in NSW and in a manner and rate stated on the label (or a current pesticide order). Seek advice from a Council Vegetation Officer or your herbicide supplier. Ensure the chosen product is suitable for the designated land use and situation. Please observe all environmental and safety cautions that are stated on the label.

Biological control: Two species of beetle, *Chrysolina hyperici* and *C. quadrigemina* are effective in dense and widespread infestations. However, most infestations within the Shire are too small or plants are widely scattered are unlikely to sustain beetle populations long-term. The adult beetles are bronze, dark-blue, or purple, about 6 mm long and oval in shape. The larvae are orange with dark heads. Both larvae and adults defoliate the weed. Larvae attack the winter growth and adults attack the spring growth. Within a few years at favourable sites the beetles reach densities, which are high enough to cause complete defoliation. The beetles are effective in open, unshaded country in conjunction with improved pasture. They are not effective in shaded country method of control in grazing lands.

Description

Perennial herb, usually about 80 cm high.

Stems: non-flowering stems to about 30 cm long grow from the crown to form tangled thickets. Erect, woody, flowering stems to 1.2 m produced from crown in spring, often reddish, with long ridges bearing dark glands.

Leaves: In opposite pairs, 5-30 mm long, 1.5-5 mm wide, oval to linear, hairless, upper margin usually curved over, underside paler; distantly black-dotted or black dots confined to near apex. Leaves appear perforated when held up to the light.

Flowers: Golden yellow with black dots on the margins. 2 cm diameter, in numerous terminal clusters. Five sepals, five petals; sepals 4-7 mm long, rarely with 1 or 2 black dots on margin; petals 2-3 times as long as sepals, flowers from October to February, depending on seasonal conditions.

Dispersal: Seeds adhere to stock and other animals, and are carried in the digestive tract of animals. Seedlings have been observed in cattle dung. Seed spreads only short distances by wind, but can be carried long distances by water, machinery and animals.



Severe St John's wort infestation (BVSC)



St John's wort plants – closer view (BVSC)

For further information: Councils Vegetation Officers Ph: (02) 6499 2222

Helpful websites www.southeastweeds.org.au
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds

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