



# Blackberry

*Rubus anglocandicans, Rubus fruticosus* agg.

**DECLARED CLASS 3**



## Description

This woody perennial shrub grows in thickets, and consists of arched, reddish purple stems up to 7 m long, with numerous hooked thorns. Leaves consist of 3 to 5 separate leaflets, are dark green on the upper side, whitish underneath, and usually bear hooked thorns on the leaf stalks. Leaves are usually shed in winter.

Flowers are 2 cm to 3 cm in diameter, white or pink in colour and are formed in clusters at the ends of the branches. Fruit change colour from green to red to black as it ripens, are succulent and edible, and consist of numerous fleshy segments, each containing one seed.

## The problem

As this weed grows in thickets, forming a dense canopy, few plants can successfully compete. The weed invades native bushland, reduces the carrying capacity of grazing land and also provides ideal habitat for rabbits and foxes. Blackberries usually invade disturbed areas, particularly where vegetation has been cleared.

## Distribution

Blackberries are a pest in all states except the Northern Territory, and have been recognised as a Weed of National Significance due to its invasiveness.

In Queensland it occurs in the Stanthorpe, Warwick, Killarney and Toowoomba areas, with Kittatinny blackberry (*Rubus bellobatus*) occurring in the Brisbane and Nambour districts.

## Dispersal

Birds and animals, such as foxes, are attracted to the fruits and are responsible for spreading the seeds over wide areas. Seeds are also distributed by water along creeks, gullies and rivers. The stems or canes are able to send out roots where they touch the ground forming daughter plants and increasing the size of the infestation. Lateral roots can produce suckers and new plants can grow from root or cane cuttings.

## Declaration details

Blackberries are a declared Class 3 plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*.

Declaration prohibits the supply and sale of Class 3 plants and recommends their removal.

## Control

### Management strategies

Maintenance of dense cover or pasture will prevent blackberry seedlings from establishing.

For established plants, chemical treatment is the most practical control method; however, for isolated plants, physical removal of the crown and root system will be effective.

### Mechanical control

Pull out small plants and ensure proper disposal by burning or putting into black plastic bags to rot down.

Slashing, cultivation and burning where appropriate followed by planting of competitive pastures, or replanting with native vegetation will control blackberry.

### Biological control

A rust fungus can attack some blackberry species. The fungus will not kill the weed, but will cause defoliation, reducing the plant's aggressiveness and rate of spread. The rust alone cannot be relied upon to give adequate levels of control.

### Herbicide control

Before using any herbicide always read the label carefully. All herbicides must be applied strictly in accordance with the directions on the label.

Herbicide application is ideal as a follow up to mechanical control (up to 75% of the plant mass may be dead canes) as this will reduce herbicide use and improve plant uptake of herbicide.

Table 1 details the herbicides registered for blackberry control.

## Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.

**TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF BLACKBERRIES**

Herbicide	Situation	Rate	Comments
Glyphosate (360 g/L)	Non-agricultural land, rights of way, irrigation channels/banks	1.0 – 1.3 L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Apply when plant actively growing.
	Pastures	1.0 – 1.3L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Spot spray only and ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems
Glyphosate (835 g/kg) + metsulfuron-methyl (10 g/kg) e.g. Trounce ® Brush-pack	Pastures, non-agricultural land, rights of way, forests,	1 x 173 g pack per 100 L water plus 100 mL wetting agent per 100 L water	Apply from flowering until prior to leaf yellowing. Do not apply when bears mature fruit. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Metsulfuron-methyl (63.2 g/kg) + glyphosate (760.5 g/kg) e.g. Cut-out ®	Pastures, non-agricultural land, rights of way	95 g sachet per 100 L water	Apply when plant actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage, stems and peripheral runners.
Triclopyr 600 g/L e.g. Garlon® 600	Agricultural non-crop areas, forests, pastures, rights of way	170 mL/100 L water	Apply during time of active growth - spring to autumn. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems
Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L e.g. Grazon DS	Non crop, non agricultural land, rights of way, pastures	0.35–0.5 L/100 L water	Apply late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems
Metsulfuron-methyl (600 g/kg) e.g. Brush-off ®	Pastures, rights of way	10 g/100 L water, plus 100 mL wetting agent per 100 L water	Apply late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems
Triclopyr (200 g/L) + picloram (100 g/L) e.g. Tordon ® DS	Agricultural non-crop areas, forests, pastures, rights of way	0,5 L/100 L water plus wetter	Apply late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems Always add an adjuvant.

Fact sheets are available from NRW service centres and the NRW Information Centre phone (07 3237 1435). Check our web site <[www.nrw.qld.gov.au](http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au)> to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this Pest Fact should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, the Department of Natural Resources and Water does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.