



Re: Burning *Pimelea spinescens* (V1_05.17)

Written and endorsed by Recovery Team members - Dr. Debbie Reynolds (Pimelea Conservation Officer – Trust for Nature), Neville Walsh (Senior Conservation Botanist - Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne), Steve Mueck (Senior Consultant Botanist – Biosis), Justine Leahy (Biodiversity Advisor – Country Fire Authority) and Vanessa Craigie (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning).

The *Pimelea spinescens* Recovery Team's position on the burning of *Pimelea spinescens* sites is:

- Biomass reduction should occur at known *P. spinescens* sites at least once every 3 years (though in areas of high productivity/high rainfall it may be necessary to burn more frequently).
- If a site has not been burnt in a period of greater than 4 years then anytime it can be burnt is likely to be beneficial to *P. spinescens*.
- Burning from late spring (November) through summer or into early autumn (April) is considered optimal.

Rationale

The most likely planned burning times are likely to be either late spring (November to December/early January) or early autumn (March to April). It should be noted that the curing progression which occurs geographically from the north west of Victoria to the south west can take 6 – 8 weeks, therefore timing of *P. spinescens* flowering/fruitletting/growing season can vary across the range of the species, so that northern areas may be burned earlier than southern ones.

1. Late spring burn (best for promoting *P. spinescens*).

In this period, grasses have usually cured to a stage where they will carry fire. Earlier in spring the biomass is not usually dry enough to burn and *P. spinescens* is likely to be still flowering or fruiting. Late in spring the biomass is well into the process of drying out and *P. spinescens* seed has usually dropped.

2. Early autumn burn.

Early in autumn the biomass is usually well dried and will readily carry fire. *Pimelea spinescens* individuals are dormant but are soon to have a growth spurt; seeds have long ago dropped. If a burn occurs in this period the plants are unlikely to flower and fruit well during the following winter but they could if the season is wet.

3. Summer burn.

During summer a grassland will usually readily burn as all the biomass is usually dry and due to either natural (lightning) or unnatural causes (machinery, arson) fire can occur. The summer burn is usually a surprise as it is rarely planned but it is a good occurrence in the grassland as it is usually a hot burn and the majority of indigenous species present are dormant. Prevailing strong northerlies may cause summer fires to be a danger to surrounding properties and assets so are rarely deliberately undertaken. Efforts to extinguish fires can often lead to damage e.g. from chemicals, vehicle traffic.

4. Winter burn (including late autumn to early spring).

During winter *P. spinescens* is in its active growing, flowering and fruiting phase. The season is usually wet and it is unlikely that the biomass will burn. This is the worst time to burn *P. spinescens* even if a fire can be maintained.