



Controlling Blackberry

Blackberry (an aggregate of species collectively known as *Rubus fruticosus*) is a major invasive weed in Victoria. Landholders are legally responsible for preventing the growth and spread of Blackberry. It can:

- Form dense thickets that smother native vegetation
- Reduce biodiversity, alter habitat structure and increase fire risk
- Invade intact habitats as well as degraded areas including agricultural land

Location and habitat

These blackberry control methods are relevant statewide across a range of habitats. Blackberry is particularly common along waterways, forest edges, and in disturbed sites with moist soils and direct sunlight.



General information

- Early intervention is critical—small infestations are far easier and cheaper to control than large ones
- Develop a plan before starting control including assessment, prioritisation, timing of control, and monitoring
- Chemical methods are most effective, but should be combined with physical methods
- Monitor areas where Blackberry has been removed and repeat treatment if necessary
- Restoring vegetation and minimising disturbance can reduce prevent the rate of Blackberry reestablishing
- Follow chemical use regulations

Methods

Chemical control

- Spray when actively growing (flowering to fruiting, typically December–March)
- Avoid spraying in extreme heat (>30°C) or onto stressed plants that may not absorb herbicide
- Choose herbicide based on site. Herbicides are sold under a variety of names. Active ingredients include:
 - **Picloram + Triclopyr (+ Aminopyralid)** – most effective for long-term control
 - **Metsulfuron-methyl** – recommended for initial treatment of large areas
 - **Glyphosate** – most effective for small areas in sensitive areas (such as near waterways and urban areas)
- Choose application technique based on site, including:
 - Foliar spraying – herbicide is sprayed directly on the plant and absorbed through the leaves. Herbicide is usually sprayed with a hand-gun. This is the most common method.
 - Cut-stump – canes are cut close to ground and herbicide is applied to stem. Effective for small areas or sensitive sites.
 - Granules or gels – herbicide is spread as granule or gel onto ground and absorbed after rain

- Follow chemical label directions, follow regulations for chemical use and take care in sensitive areas (such as near waterways, intact native vegetation, market gardens, wineries and urban areas)

Physical control

- Physical methods include removing Blackberry by hand, hand tools or machinery
- Seedlings can be manually removed by hand if found and controlled while very small
- Using physical control methods alone is not effective for controlling established Blackberry infestations – a combination of physical and chemical control methods is most effective





- Intermittent physical control can increase the vigor of blackberry infestations by creating disturbance and stimulating regrowth as well as seed germination
- Slashing can be an effective method to reduce the size of Blackberry thickets to a manageable height and increase ease of access for control. Slashing will stimulate new growth to which herbicide can be applied
- If using mechanical control, all root material must be removed to be an effective standalone control method. Disturbance will stimulate the seed germination and require follow-up treatment
- Follow-up control and monitoring is essential

Further information

If you have a conservation covenant, please consult with your Trust for Nature regional staff member to ensure land management activities are in line with your covenant deed.

For further advice and support, please contact Trust for Nature.

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Maintenance and monitoring

- Monitor treated areas for regrowth and new infestations
- Use photo points and mapping to track progress
- Treat regrowth promptly and rehabilitate cleared sites
- Encourage natural regeneration or replant with competitive species
- Record all treatments and outcomes for evaluation
- Work with neighbours, Landcare groups and public land managers for coordinated control programs



Safety

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking land management. Follow all label instructions on equipment and local regulations. Be mindful of weather conditions. Do not conduct land management on days of extreme or catastrophic fire danger or total fire ban.

