



Rural City of
Wangaratta

Roadside Weed and Pest Program



Overview

The RCoW Roadside Weed and Pest Management Program (RWPP) is an annual weed and rabbit control program undertaken on Council managed roadsides. In addition to the RWPP Council also undertakes weed and rabbit control on other Council managed land including bush reserves and along the Rail Trail.

The aim of these programs is to protect native vegetation and address potential pest threats to adjoining landholders and the agricultural industry. The RCoW is also committed to being a responsible land manager fulfilling its legislative responsibilities for pest control under the Catchment and Land Protection (CALP) Act 1994.

The RCoW Roadside Conservation Management and Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plans guide this program. Over 50% of RCoW roadsides are classified as very high, high or medium conservation value. Weeds and physical disturbance are the major threats to these valuable environmental assets.

Target pests include all listed noxious weeds for the North East region, some environmental weeds eg Blue Periwinkle, wild fruit trees (to control fruit fly) and rabbits. The majority of this work occurs across the Rural City of Wangaratta between September and January. Table 1 lists all species targeted, the timing of the control works and chemicals used. Weed spraying is conducted in accordance with the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992 (AVC Act).

RWPP Rabbit control works.

Rabbit control is carried out annually on Council managed land (primarily roadsides and the Rail Trail) throughout the RCoW municipality. Council employs a contractor to destroy burrows using a 'Rodenator' which works by imploding the warrens. This instantly eradicates any rabbits in the burrows as well as destroying the warren system thus preventing future breeding at that location. The use of a Rodenator has proved to be the safest and most effective way of eliminating rabbits in a roadside or Rail Trail situation as it has a low impact on infrastructure and native vegetation.

Landholders may report hearing explosions in the immediate locality. Generally contractors notify local police where they are working.

The program operates in partnership with Landcare groups and the DELWP Compliance Program. Council's RWPP coordinator is happy to receive information from the public about the location of active warrens on Council land to add to the annual works list. The bulk of the control work (approximately 10 days) is carried out in Autumn during dry conditions after the fire danger period has passed. Follow-up work is also carried out in spring on new or very extensive warrens (approximately two days).



RWPP Weed control works.

The RCoW has engaged a panel of local weed control contractors who have demonstrated expertise in chemical handling and the identification of native and introduced vegetation species. Contractors are engaged in removing weeds from the roadside reserves – the area between the road shoulder and fence lines in their work zone.

All weed control contractors have a Commercial Operators License and abide by safety standard procedures specified for the state of Victoria.

The chemicals used are herbicides to target specific weed species as recommended by the AVC Act. A list of chemicals used for each target weed and timing of treatment is provided in Table 1. Herbicides are plant specific chemicals (unlike pesticides designed for the control of insects and small animals). Use of all chemicals is strictly guided by the chemical specific labels, safety data sheets and the recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the product is used.

Most of the weed control work (95%) is done by spot spraying to target specific plants. This means that the minimum amount of chemical is used in controlling the target weed. Spraying is not conducted near vineyards, orchards or hop gardens until after leaf fall in autumn. Other methods include cutting and painting (with herbicide) stems of small woody weeds or stem injection of herbicide into mature trees.



Chilean Needle Grass

When treating Chilean Needle Grass (CNG), African Love Grass (ALG) and Coolatai grass, blue marker dye (product called Vegi-Dye Blue) is used to ensure accuracy and to avoid over application of herbicides. This also increases public awareness of what these invasive introduced grasses look like and where they are located.

New and emerging weeds are a key focus. The program aims to prevent them becoming established in the municipality. There are small infestations of Coolatai and African Love Grass which are treated annually. Serrated Tussock is

on the watch list. Notification of weeds by our community is welcomed as it is not possible to inspect every roadside every year.

Other Council weed control works

The RWPP is not to be confused with road maintenance vegetation control carried out by Council. These two different programs have different aims, operational works and funding sources. Road maintenance is undertaken by RCoW's Vegetation Management team. This program targets road shoulders, around culverts, drains, signage and guide posts. It aims to eliminate all vegetation in the target area to provide a clear view zone and to maintain fuel reduced corridors as part of the Fire Prevention Strategy of the Municipality.

Contact

For further information please visit www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Residents/Environment-and-sustainability

To report noxious weed or rabbit warren locations please contact the RWPP coordinator on 5722 0888 or email environment@wangaratta.vic.gov.au

Table 1. Target species, timing of treatment and chemicals used.

Target weed and category	Treatment period	Chemicals used to treat
Bridal Creeper Weed of National Significance (WoNS), Restricted (State)	August to September	Metsulfuron600, Grazon, Woody, Chemtrol, Bow Saw Devour (penetrant) Wetter 1000
Patterson's Curse Regionally Controlled (State)	August to September	Woody, Chemtrol, Bow Saw, Metsulfuron 600, LI 700 (penetrant)
Blue periwinkle, Purple wood Sorrel Environmental weeds	August to September	Agtryne MA, Devour 1020 (penetrant)32
Rabbits Declared Pest – State & National	August and April to May	Rodenation
Box Thorn, Briar rose, Broom (WoNS), Gorse (WoNS), Horehound, Patterson's Curse, Spiny Rush Regionally Controlled (State)	September to October	Woody, Metsulfuron 600 LI 700 Penetrant, Axeman, Bow Saw, Chemtrol (wetter)

Caper Spurge, garden escapee bulbs, Spanish Heath, woody weed seedlings (Peppercorn, Elm, Ash, Acers, other non-native trees and shrubs) Environmental Weeds	September to October	Woody, Metsulfuron 600 LI 700 Penetrant, Axeman, Bow Saw, Chemtrol (wetter)
St Johns Wort Regionally Controlled (State)	October to December	Woody, Axeman, Bow Saw Chemtrol
Chilean Needle Grass, WoNS (National), Restricted (State) Coolatai Grass, Environmental – highly invasive	November and March-May	Rocky 745, Glyphosate Green 360 Vegi-Dye Blue
Blackberry Regionally Controlled (State)	Mid Nov to Dec and Autumn after leaf fall near vineyards	Woody and Deluge (wetting agent)
Skeleton Weed , Watsonia Regionally Controlled (State)	November to December	Amicide, Glyphosate Green 360
Fruit Tree seedlings Environmental weeds	December	Woody, Metsulfuron 600 LI 700 Penetrant, Axeman, Bow Saw, Chemtrol (wetter)
Caltrop Regionally Controlled (State)	November to April	Kamba M, Wetter 1000
Hawthorn, Tree of heaven, Stinkwort Regionally Controlled (State) False Acacia, Box Elder Environmental weeds Mature Fruit trees DEDJTR Fruit fly control project	February to March	Woody, Chemtrol (wetter), Metsulfuron 600, Grazon
African Love Grass Regionally Controlled (State)	February to April	Rocky, Glyphosate green 360, Vegi Blu Dye
Prickly Pear (WoNS) Wheel Cactus Regionally Controlled (State) Agave Environmental weed	March to May	Access and diesel fuel mix
Sour Sob Restricted (State)	July to November	Woody, Grazon, Glyphosate Green 360

