

Management strategies

How to treat

Fireweed is a weed of national significance.

Prevention

The best approach to fireweed control is to prevent it establishing by ensuring that there is a dense cover of pasture in autumn and winter. Waiting until autumn to begin pasture improvement will worsen the fireweed problem because fireweed, which germinates in autumn, will be promoted ahead of the pasture by fertilising and direct drilling of winter pasture species.

When small infestations of fireweed are identified, act immediately to prevent the situation from becoming worse and to increase the likelihood of eradication by spot spraying with Grazon Extra or Hotshot.

Early detection and removal is vital. Seed is long-lived in the soil and is produced in large quantities, so prevention of seeding is important. Continued vigilance on your property for new outbreaks is required to prevent the establishment of the weed.

Chemical control

Losses of up to 62% in pasture productivity have been recorded during August and September. Therefore, the best control strategy is to keep fireweed off your property. Any plants found should be destroyed before setting seed to prevent infestation. Successful control requires a management program that removes the weed by hand or herbicides and replacing it with competitive perennial pasture species. Keep stock away from fruiting plants. Ensure purchases of fodder, produce, stock and soils are free of weed seeds.

Treatment tips

For best results, treat seedling plants prior to flowering. Both Grazon Extra and Hotshot are registered for foliar/spot application.

Hotshot is also registered for boom application at 1.5 L/ha and should be used in predominantly grass-based pastures.

Both kikuyu and couch grass may see transitory damage from both Grazon Extra and Hotshot.

As fireweed is not noticed in many paddocks until it is flowering, applying herbicides during flowering will not sterilise the seed but will help reduce the number of seedlings that germinate the following season.

Note: Use of Grazon Extra and Hotshot will also control any legume component in the grass pasture.



Fireweed

(Senecio madagascariensis)



Hotshot[®]
HERBICIDE



Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*)

Description

Fireweed is a member of the Asteraceae plant family. It is a daisy-like plant with endearing yellow flowers. It comes in a herb form and originated from South Africa. Fireweed has a variable growth habit and leaf structure, growing from 10 to 50 cm high. In coastal districts, the most common form of fireweed is a low, heavily branched, short-lived perennial plant. Although leaf shape and structure can vary, leaves are generally bright green, alternate, narrow with serrated, entire or lobed margins. The broader leaves are usually clasped around the stem and are 2–6 cm long, occasionally reaching 8–10 cm on vigorous and older plants.

Fireweed has a shallow, branched tap root with numerous fibrous roots, growing from 10 to 20 cm deep. Petal numbers are usually a constant 13.

Plants flower mainly from April to September, with individual plants often having a wide range of flowering stages at any one time. Seeds are small (1–3 mm long), light and slender. They are cylindrical in shape, with a downy surface and attached to a pappus of fine, silky white feathery hairs.

The plant produces large quantities of seed over long periods that are easily dispersed by the wind. Each flower produces between 100 and 150 seeds. Long distance dispersal also occurs by seeds on animals, in stock feed or in mud on vehicles. Its main threat is that it can outgrow most useful pasture plants. Fireweed also readily invades pastures damaged by overgrazing and drought. Fireweed seems equally at home in low-elevation, arid pastures as in high-elevation, moist pastures.

Timing – Nth NSW/Qld

When using foliar sprays always treat when the plant is actively growing.

Product	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Hotshot® Herbicide	🌀	✓	✓	🌀	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	🌀	✗	✗
Grazon® Extra Herbicide	🌀	✓	✓	🌀	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	🌀	✗	✗

Timing – Sth NSW

Product	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Hotshot® Herbicide	🌀	🌀	🌀	✗	✗	✗	🌀	✓	✓	✓	🌀	🌀
Grazon® Extra Herbicide	🌀	🌀	🌀	✗	✗	✗	🌀	✓	✓	✓	🌀	🌀

KEY:

- ✓ Best time to spray/treat
- 🌀 Can spray/treat if conditions are suitable
- ✗ Do not spray/treat

Herbicides for control of fireweed

Product*	Method of application	Rate†	State
Hotshot® Herbicide	Foliar spray	500 mL/100 L of water	All
Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar spray	350 mL/100 L of water	All
Trezac® Arylex® active Herbicide	Foliar spray	200 mL + 300 mL Starane® Advanced/100 L of water	All
Hotshot® Herbicide	Boom application	1.5 L/ha	All

Note: Preferred product option in bold. † Consult label for details of growth stage and use, especially where range of rates is given.



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