

Invasive plants and animals

Camphor laurel

Cinnamomum camphora (Lauraceae)



DECLARED CLASS 3



Camphor laurel is an attractive shade tree, but can be very destructive. This large, introduced tree aggressively replaces native vegetation. Camphor laurel invades pastures and disturbed riparian systems and is a troublesome weed on dairy farms throughout south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales.

Declaration details

Camphor laurel is a declared Class 3 plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. Class 3 plants cannot be sold in Queensland and their removal in Queensland is recommended. Landholders can be required to remove Class 3 plants if they live next to environmentally significant areas such as national parks or reserves.

Description

Camphor laurel is a large evergreen tree, growing up to 20 m tall. The leaves have a glossy, waxy appearance and smell of camphor when crushed. In spring, it produces lush, bright green foliage and masses of small white flowers. The spherical fruits are 10 mm across, green at first changing to black when ripe.

The problem

Camphor laurel was introduced into Australia from Asia in 1822. It has been promoted and planted as a garden ornamental throughout Queensland.

Although the visual beauty of camphor laurel trees cannot be denied, the long-term consequences of its spread may result in the loss of native wildlife and agricultural productivity over large areas of south-eastern Queensland.

Camphor laurel is considered a pest for agricultural, environmental and urban reasons:

Agricultural

Camphor laurel can invade and smother pastures. Its control is a constant expense for many graziers. Camphor laurel tends to germinate most frequently under fences and powerlines (wherever birds rest and deposit the seed). As a result, camphor laurel can push over fences and disrupt power facilities.

Environmental

Camphor laurel is capable of replacing native trees. Along the waterways of South-East Queensland, camphor laurels are replacing the native blue gums, one of the favourite food trees of the koala. This means our koala populations may be reduced.

Urban

Old camphor laurel trees develop a massive root system which may block drains and crack concrete structures. The average suburban backyard is far too small to accommodate a mature camphor laurel without problems. Removal of a mature camphor laurel tree from a backyard can cost hundreds of dollars.

Distribution

Camphor laurel is native to Taiwan, Japan and some parts of China. Since it was introduced in 1822 it has spread right along eastern Australia from the Atherton Tablelands south to Victoria. It is particularly common along watercourses and on soil types which once supported rainforest.

In south-east Queensland, camphor laurel has the potential to develop dense infestations similar to older infestations which exist in Northern New South Wales.

A large camphor laurel tree may produce over 100 000 seeds every year. The seeds are readily spread by a few species of birds.

Control

The spread of weeds threatens the sustainability of agriculture and other land uses. Weeds also devastate native plants and animals.

The best form of weed control is prevention. Always treat weed infestations when small, do not allow weeds to establish. Weed control is not cheap, but it is cheaper now than next year, or the year after. Proper planning ensures you get value for each dollar spent.

Look at your weed problem carefully. Can you realistically eradicate it? Or should you contain the weed to stop new infestations developing while you reduce existing ones? What are you required to do by legislation? How does weed control fit into your property plan? What can you do to restore areas and prevent re-establishment?

The best approach is usually to combine different methods. Control may include chemical, mechanical, fire and biological methods combined with land management changes. The control methods you choose should suit the specific weed and your particular situation.

Mechanical

Removal of newly established or isolated seedlings by hand pulling or grubbing is effective.

Bulldozing is only suitable for young trees which can be removed the crowns and all. Failure to remove roots of mature trees will result in regrowth.

Fire kills plant tops but produces regrowth from the base.

Herbicide

Selection of a suitable method depends on the size of the target tree and its situation. Treated standing trees may be a serious hazard to human safety or other structures when they fall. Removal of the bulk of the tree before treating the stump is preferred in such situations.

Table 1 details the herbicides registered for camphor laurel control. Before using any herbicide always read the label carefully. All herbicides must be applied strictly in accordance with the label.

For young trees up to 3 m tall foliar sprays can be used. Trees up to 6 m tall and with a basal stem diameter up to 30 cm and no multi-stems can be treated by basal bark or cut stump methods; basal bark is preferred. For trees taller than 6 m stem injection using a modified axe is the most practical method; leave no more than 2 cm between cuts.

When using the basal bark method spray from ground level up to a height of 30 cm or higher than where multi-stems branch.

Axe cuts for stem injection of herbicides should be made at regular intervals all around the stem (or stems). Care should be taken to ensure the axe leaves a "pocket" in the stem, into which the chemical is immediately injected. Cuts should penetrate the sapwood (just under the bark), but not the hard central wood. Cuts made too shallow into the bark or too deep into the stem will result in regrowth. The practice of drilling holes in the stem prior to herbicide application is not recommended.

Further information

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

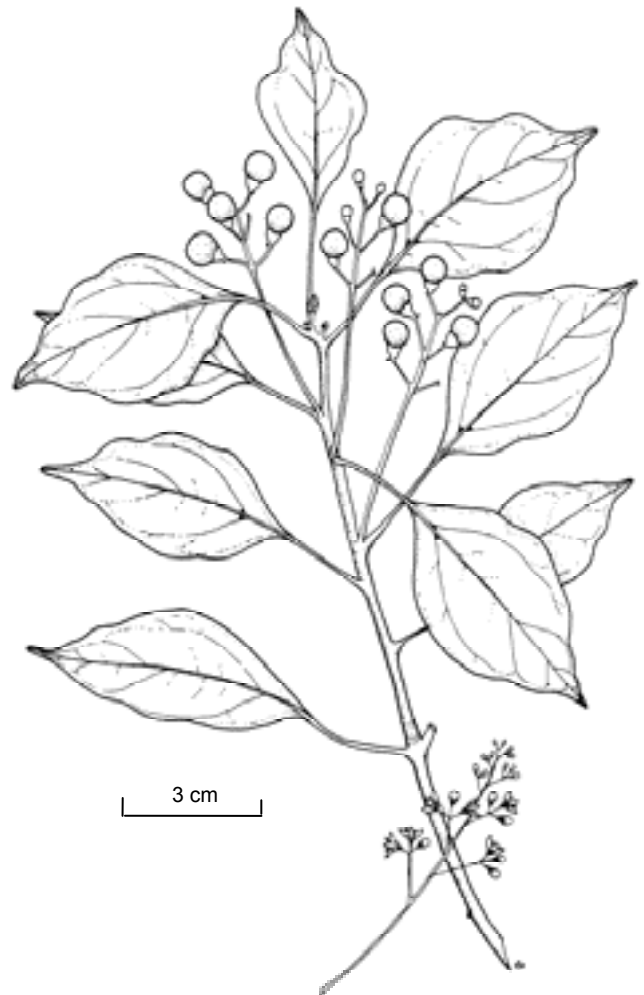


TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF CAMPHOR LAUREL

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
pastures; non crop; forestry; rights-of-way; aquatic areas	Triclopyr-butotyl + picloram e.g. Grazon DS®	350-500 mL/100 L water	High volume spray for trees up to 3 m tall. Higher rate for > 2 m tall
		2.5 L/100 L water	Air blast/mister. Foliar spray
		1:20 water	Gas gun or sprinkler sprayer Foliar spray
pastures; non crop; forestry; rights-of-way; aquatic areas	Triclopyr-butotyl e.g. Garlon 600®	170 mL/100 L water	High volume foliar spray up to 3 m tall
		1 L in 60 L diesel	Basal bark for trees up to 6 m tall and 30 cm stem diameter or cut stump
pastures; non crop; forestry; rights-of-way; aquatic areas	Glyphosate-IPA	2 mL of 1:1 mix with water	Stem injection for trees up to 25 cm diameter
		2 mL undiluted	Stem injection for trees 25–60 cm diameter

Fact sheets are available from DPI&F service centres and the DPI&F Information Centre phone (13 25 23). Check our web site <www.dpi.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 Primary Industries and Fisheries does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.