**Crofton weed**

*Ageratina adenophora*

Crofton weed is an aggressive weed in pastures in the valleys and on the plateaus in south-eastern Queensland. On wet slopes it has invaded kikuyu grass pasture.

Crofton weed is an aggressive weed which is poisonous to horses, causing serious respiratory damage that can cause death.

No method of preventing losses is known, other than denying horses access to crofton weed or refraining from working them hard.

**Legal requirements**

Crofton weed is not a prohibited or restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. However, by law, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants and animals under their control.

Local governments must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants and animals in their area. This plan may include actions to be taken on certain species. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

**Description**

Crofton weed is a herb that is perennial, very shrubby with a woody rootstock and numerous upright branching stems. Crofton weed grows between 1–2 m high.

Stems red which dull with age, soft young stems establish roots where they touch the ground. The leaves are bright green, trowel-shaped, 50–75 mm long, 25–50 mm broad with the edges toothed.
Flowers are white growing in small, dense heads at the ends of the branches, 5–8 mm across. Seeds are slender, angular, 2 mm long, almost black, with fine white hairs at the tip.

**Habitat and distribution**

A native of Chile and Peru, crofton weed was introduced to Australia in 1875 as an ornamental plant but soon spread out of control. Newly cleared land along the New South Wales and Queensland border in 1940’s was soon overrun. Restricted to south-eastern Queensland.

Crofton weed grows in wet shaded areas fringing forest and along streams. It favours southerly facing damp slopes and is found along roadsides and overgrazed pastures.

**Life cycle**

Crofton weed usually buds in August and flowers from September on, producing many wind-blown ‘seeds’ (achenes). After flowering, the top of the plant senesces and reshoots from the base.

Crofton weed can germinate during wet summer periods and develop into good sized plants within twelve weeks, to flower the following spring.

**Control**

Chip out small infestations before flowering is strongly recommended to prevent developing into large infestations which can be very difficult to control.

When plants have died following herbicide spraying, the area should be planted to pasture grasses to provide competition against seedling regrowth. Newly established pasture preferably should not be grazed until they have set seed (about twelve months). Remove any regrowth of crofton weed manually, or by high volume application (spot spray) of a selective herbicide (one which does not damage the pasture) in accordance with Table 1.

**Mechanical control**

Cultivation, grubbing, hoeing and burning, along with planting of competitive pastures combined with fertilisation, will control the weed in accessible areas.

**Herbicide control**

See Table 1 for registered herbicides for control.

**Biological control**

A stem gall-fly was introduced in 1951 but was heavily parasitised and exerts little impact on plants. A leaf spot fungus (*Cercospora eupatoris*) does exert some effect, especially on seedlings.

**Further information**

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au).
Table 1. Herbicides for the control of crofton weed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Herbicide</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastures; non-agricultural, commercial land; rights-of-way</td>
<td>glyphosate 360 g/L</td>
<td>0.5 L/100 L</td>
<td>Handgun application, high volume foliar spray. Note: will also kill pasture</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>75 mL/15 L</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fluroxypyr (200 g/L) e.g. Starane®</td>
<td>0.5 L/100 L</td>
<td>High volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75 mL/15 L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastures; non-agricultural, commercial land; rights-of-way</td>
<td>picloram + 2,4-D 75 g + 300 g e.g. Tordon 75-D®</td>
<td>0.65 L/100 L</td>
<td>Spot spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastures; non-agricultural, commercial land; rights-of-way</td>
<td>picloram + triclopyr e.g. Grazon®</td>
<td>0.35 L/100 L</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 L/100 L</td>
<td>Misting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastures</td>
<td>dicamba + MCPA e.g. Banvel M®</td>
<td>2.8-4 L/ha</td>
<td>Boom spray. Use higher rate for larger plants. Avoid spraying legume pastures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastures; non-agricultural, commercial land; rights-of-way</td>
<td>metsulfuron methyl e.g. Brush Off®</td>
<td>15 g/100 L</td>
<td>Handgun. Thoroughly wet all foliage but not to run off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Overall spray plants to the point of runoff using a power spray or a knapsack preferably at the budding stage of growth.

**Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.**