

Priority weeds

Bega Valley Shire Council Weed Fact Sheet

Lantana

(*Lantana camara*)

Why is Lantana a weed?

- is poisonous to animals and humans
- invades native grassland and pastures
- invades eucalyptus and pine plantations
- fuels bushfires
- can restrict access to bushland and waterways
- costs land managers more than \$22 million each year to control.

Description and identification

There are five main types with different flower colors: pink, red, orange, white and pink-edged red. Red lantana has pricklier stems and darker green leaves than pink lantana.

Plant: Dense shrub, although it can drop its leaves in dry times. It usually grows from 2 – 4 m high but can scramble up into trees. Square with short, curved prickles.

Leaves: Rough and bright green on top hairy and pale green underneath with serrated edges and fragrant when crushed. Leaves are in pairs, opposite each other on stems on a short stalk about 10 cm long 2 – 8 cm wide, egg to spearhead-shaped.

Flowers: In clusters of different colors depending on the type of lantana, age and location. Flowers can be pink, red, orange, white and pink-edged red. Flowers produced almost year round.

Fruit: 6 – 8 mm in diameter round berries in a group green to start shiny, dark purple-black when ripe with one seed per fruit.

What types of environment does it grow in and how does it spread?

Lantana can quickly colonise roadsides, power line and



railway easements, river banks, fence-lines, forestry, pastures, open native woodlands and subtropical rainforest edges. Lantana can grow in steep, inaccessible areas. Lantana often invades disturbed areas where vegetation has been cleared. It's less likely to grow in undisturbed bushland.

Lantana prefers:

- warm weather with more than 900 mm annual rainfall
- well-drained, fertile soils
- coastal areas
- altitudes up to 1000 m.

Lantana was sold as an ornamental plant.

A single plant can produce up to 12,000 fruit (and seeds) in a year. Most seeds are spread by birds and some animals that eat the fruit. Lantana seed is more likely to germinate if it has been through the gut of a bird or mammal. Seeds are also spread by water, in soil, on machinery and garden waste. About half of seeds remain viable for up to two years in dry conditions and some may survive for five years.

Biosecurity Duty: The content provided here is for information purposes only and is taken from the Biosecurity Act 2015 and its subordinate legislation, and the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans (published by each Local Land Services region in NSW). It describes the state and regional priorities for weeds in New South Wales, Australia.

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Control methods

Successful weed control takes time and follow up efforts to monitor and suppress weeds. A combination of control methods is usually needed.

To control lantana:

- gradually control sections of large infestations, starting at the edges (do as much at a time as you can follow up)
- dry or frosty periods are good times to work on mature lantana plants
- treat regrowth or seedlings before they are 1 m high
- control young plants before they are a year old to prevent new fruit and seeds
- in summer, look for a flush of seedlings after rain, and kill the seedlings 1 – 3 after the rain event (lantana seeds can germinate year round but peak after summer rain).
- 1 – 3 months after clearing, burning or cultivation, look for regrowth or new seedlings and control them.
- 3 – 6 months after the end of a dry spell, look for dry lantana that appeared dead reshooting from the base, and control the regrowth
- in spring, look for plants that reshoot after frost damage, and control the survivors.

Physical removal: year round, after rain when soil is moist.

Chemical control: Pink flowered lantana is easier to control with herbicide. Red flowered varieties are harder to kill.

Spraying leaves: Small plants less than 2 m can be sprayed at any time of the year as long as they are actively growing. Stressed plants don't take up much herbicide. Treat regrowth from burning, cutting, slashing or frost when plants are 30 cm to 1 m high.

Spray mature lantana (>2 m high) between February and the first frost.



Early morning or late afternoon is the best time to spray during Autumn.

Cut stump method

Cut stems off at about 15 cm from the ground. Apply herbicide to the cut surface of the stump within 15 seconds. Treat every cut stem because lantana regrows vigorously from untreated stems.

Land owner/occupier requirements

All property managers have a responsibility to prevent, eliminate or minimize adverse effects on the economy, the environment and the community that arise from weeds. Where full control is feasible Council will enforce that requirement. Where widespread and established invasive species have become “naturalized” in our environment and full control is not deemed feasible by Council it will promote a strategy of minimization and containment.

Outcome to demonstrate compliance with your General Biosecurity Duty

A person should not deal with the plant, where dealings include but are not limited to buying, selling, growing, moving, carrying, or releasing.

Lantana is identified within the South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023 – 2027. The Plan specifies that the Bega Valley Council area is within the South East exclusion zone for Lantana.

Within the exclusion zone land managers should eradicate the plant from the land and keep the land free of the plant. Land managers must notify the local control authority if found.