

Weed Removal Techniques

There are various removal techniques for different weeds, at different stages of life. Apart from hand pulling which can be effective (but very time consuming), almost all methods will require the use of some form of herbicide.

Herbicides are poisons and should be handled very carefully. Many are not selective in the plants they kill and they can be very harmful to wildlife, especially amphibians. It is important to always follow label guidelines and to seek advice from professionals if you are ever unsure.

The first thing to do is assess the situation to determine the best method of removal. This can reduce the amount of follow up work required. You will also need to determine if there are any animals that use the weeds for habitat. For example, possums and owls that use Sweet Pittosporum will have a better chance of survival if the trees are drilled and filled to die slowly, rather than complete, instantaneous removal.

Before you start

To ensure success with weed removal, especially in a larger area or on a more sensitive scale, standard guidelines and techniques should be followed.

The first thing to consider is parent plants that are readily spreading seeds. Dealing with these now can save a lot of time in the future.

If weeds can be killed where they stand by using techniques such as solarisation (covering with black plastic), drill and fill, spraying etc, it reduces the work because you don't have to remove the weeds from the site and pay to dispose of them.

Never dump your garden waste on roadsides or reserves as this is a big cause of weed spread and invasion.

Weed Removal Tips...

What you will need...

Ensure you have appropriate tools and safety equipment. Typically, you will need:

- Protective clothing (i.e. impervious gloves, eye protection, long sleeves and long pants etc)
- Dabber bottle (containing a registered herbicide - Council can provide empty dabber bottles)
- Trowel or knife (for digging out weeds by the roots)
- Saw, secateurs, loppers (for the cut and paint method)
- Drill, chisel, axe (for drill and fill, frilling and chipping methods)
- Bags (for removing weeds from the site)

Any cut weeds should be removed from the site and any exposed earth should be covered with debris

Remember...

SAFETY First

Assess the situation **BEFORE** you start work

Make sure all **HAZARDS** are removed

Consider all environmental **IMPACTS** of your work

Ensure containers containing chemicals are clearly **LABELED**



When to treat with herbicide...

Consider the time of year and the growing stage of the plant. Most plants should be treated with herbicide when they are actively growing. Deciduous plants should be treated in late spring or summer when in full leaf. In general, plants that are bulbous or those which sucker should be treated before they flower.



Drill and Fill, Frilling, Chipping: Suitable for woody weeds larger than 7.5cm in diameter

- Make a 45 degree hole, 2-3cm deep, as far down at the base of the tree as possible. Holes can be created using a drill, or by hitting a chisel into the tree.
- Fill the hole immediately with a registered herbicide.
- Repeat this process at intervals of 3cm around the entire base of the tree.
- If there are exposed roots, drill and fill these as well.
- For frilling, use an axe to chip around the base of the tree (not too deep as you don't want to ringbark it).
- Place herbicide into the cuts, being careful not to spill or use too much herbicide.



Cut and Paint: Suitable for small to medium sized woody weeds (up to around 7.5cm in diameter)

- Gently clear away any vegetation from the treatment site.
- Using secateurs, loppers or a hand saw, cut the stem of the plant as close to the ground as possible.
- Using a dabber bottle containing a registered herbicide, paint the stump immediately (within 20 seconds) so that the plant draws the poison into its root system.



Remove by Hand: Suitable for seedlings, herbaceous weeds and many grasses

- It is important to remember that all root matter should be removed to avoid the plant resprouting.
- If the plant is seeding, either cut off the seed heads or place a bag over them before you attempt any removal. This should reduce the spread of the seed.
- For plants that have long tap roots or bulbs, use a trowel or long knife to assist with loosening the soil.
- Be sure to cover any exposed soil with organic matter to try and reduce more weed growth.



Stem and Leaf Swiping: Suitable for herbaceous plants with bulbs, tubers or corms, eg. Montbretia and Watsonia

- Using a dabber bottle, swipe the stems and/or the leaves.
- Use a tool such as secateurs or a knife to assist you.