

Control Techniques



An integrated approach using a combination of different methods has been found to give the best results in controlling lantana. Follow-up control is critical for long-term success as lantana and other weeds will colonise the cleared area.

- In small areas of high conservation value labour intensive physical and/or chemical methods should be used to remove lantana. Primary control should involve cut-stump painting to minimise soil disturbance, followed by secondary hand-pulling of seedlings when regrowth emerges;
- Moderate to large infestations may be treated with ground vehicle application of high volume herbicides and/or mechanical means where suited (taking care not to overclear in unstable or sensitive areas);
- Revegetation with local native plants or pasture grasses is an essential element that needs to be incorporated in any lantana management program. Revegetation provides competition and prevents lantana or other weed species from re-establishing.

Herbicide:

Herbicides are effective in controlling lantana if correct choice of herbicide, application rates, timing and followup, are adhered to. Remember, prolonged dry periods make herbicide control less effective as this plant is easily stressed, especially in summer.

Biocontrol:

Various biocontrol agents have been released in Australia over a period of more than 70 years, most between 1955 and 1980. On the South Coast a Lantana Biological Control Task Force has been set up to oversee the introduction of biocontrol agents for lantana. *Aconophora compressa* has been recently released with some success on the South Coast.

Important Information

Caution should always be exercised when controlling Lantana. In some situations Lantana may be holding streambanks or hillsides together as well as providing valuable habitat for native fauna. Other more damaging weeds can also invade areas cleared of Lantana.

It is recommended to seek professional advice on appropriate control strategies based on the individual sites before commencing any Lantana control program.

For more information, contact any of the following:

- Your local council
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Landcare
- Coastcare
- Dunecare
- Bushcare
- Write to the address below, or
- Visit the Weeds of National Significance Website: www.weeds.org.au, and the South Coast Weeds Website: www.esc.nsw.gov.au/weeds



ABOVE: biological control agents for Lantana - Left to Right: *Octotoma championi*, *Aconophora compressa* and *Ophiomyia lantanae*
TOP LEFT: Herbicide application to lantana (Photos courtesy of M Day and I Borrowdale)

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Beating Lantana on the NSW South Coast

An Integrated Approach To Lantana Control



RIGHT: *Lantana camara* (Photo courtesy of M. Day)

On the NSW South Coast lantana is a serious environmental weed often found in association with bitou bush and a number of other problem weeds.

It is declared noxious in Eurobodalla Shire and a number of other local government areas in NSW and Queensland. There is a legal obligation to control lantana within these areas.

In June 1999 lantana was listed as a Weed of National Significance—one of the 20 “Most Wanted Weeds” in Australia. Efforts are now under way to monitor and control the spread of lantana using the resources of local councils, government agencies, private landholders and local groups such as Landcare, Coastcare, Dunecare and Bushcare.

Find out how you can help in this valuable work of reclaiming YOUR coastal bushland for native species.

A Snapshot of Lantana

The Plant

Lantana is a native of South & Central America and has no natural enemies in Australia.

Many varieties occur in Australia and some are serious environmental weeds. Pink lantana is the main lantana type found south of Sydney.

Lantana is characterised by the following:

- 1 It grows in warm, high rainfall environments from beaches to highlands;
- 2 It is a brittle, much-branched thicket forming shrub with square stems;
- 3 It has yellow-green to dark green leaves, that are rough to the touch and have a strong smell when crushed;
- 4 It displays pink, red or yellow flowers throughout the year;
- 5 It has fleshy green fruit that turn black when ripe.

Lantana is a prolific seed producer. A mature plant can produce up to 12,000 seeds in one season. Seeds are eaten by birds and foxes which can disperse the seeds several kilometres into uninfested areas. Germination may occur any time of year given enough moisture, and is higher after ingestion by birds and mammals.

RIGHT: Picture of the growth habit of *Lantana camara*.



TOP RIGHT: Detail of leaf and flower

The Problem

Lantana currently infests 4 million hectares along the east coast of Australia and costs \$45-50 million annually in control and lost production.

Much of the NSW South Coast coastline has been invaded by lantana in some areas to the point where it dominates the vegetation.

On the South Coast lantana is an opportunistic woody weed that will often be the first to invade after bitou bush removal.

It forms dense impenetrable thickets which impede access, alter fire regimes and reduce amenity and property values,

Lantana is capable of invading both agricultural and natural ecosystems and in so doing reduces productivity and biodiversity.

It provides harbour to vermin, including rabbits, foxes and feral cats.

Lantana is continuing to invade new areas on the South Coast.

What Can You Do To Help?

Prevention and early intervention to interrupt invasion into new areas is the most cost effective technique that can be employed against weeds.



Don't give lantana or other weeds a 'way-in' by allowing them to become established in the first instance and then spreading to adjoining areas.

You can reduce the risk of lantana invading or encroaching onto your property or patch of bushland by ensuring desirable competitive species are well established and regularly monitoring your site for lantana plants. Implementing appropriate control strategies following detection will further reduce the probability of lantana establishing.

You can help proactively in the management of existing well-established lantana infestations by undertaking regular and appropriate control programs.

You can also assist by joining a local care group and personally taking part in their organised control activities. Further, give your full support to your council's control initiatives wherever possible. We can only control lantana if we all work together.

ABOVE: Choosing alternative plants to replace lantana