

# Blackberry

*Rubus anglocandicans, Rubus fruticosus agg.*



As blackberry grows in thickets, forming a dense canopy, few plants can successfully compete. The weed invades native bushland, reduces the carrying capacity of grazing land and also provides ideal habitat for rabbits and foxes. Blackberries usually invade disturbed areas, particularly where vegetation has been cleared. Blackberries are a pest in all states except the Northern Territory and have been recognised as a Weed of National Significance due to its invasiveness.

## Legal requirements

Blackberry is a category 3 restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be given away, sold, or released into the environment. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO). This fact sheet gives examples of how you can meet your GBO.



Queensland  
Government

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on blackberry. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

## Description

This woody perennial shrub grows in thickets and consists of arched, reddish-purple stems up to 7 m long, with numerous hooked thorns. Leaves consist of 3–5 separate leaflets, are dark green on the upper side, whitish underneath, and usually have hooked thorns on the leaf stalks. Leaves are typically shed in winter.

Flowers are 2–3 cm in diameter, white or pink in colour and are formed in clusters at the ends of the branches.

Fruit change colour from green to red to black as it ripens, are succulent and edible, and consist of numerous fleshy segments each containing one seed.

## Life cycle

The seeds from the fruit germinate in Spring. Blackberry grows over the winter months and flowers from November to March. The fruit develops from January to March.

## Methods of spread

Birds and animals (e.g. foxes) are attracted to the fruit and are responsible for spreading the seeds over wide areas. Seeds are also distributed by water along creeks, gullies and rivers.

The stems can send out roots where they touch the ground, forming daughter plants and increasing the size of the infestation. Lateral roots can produce suckers and new plants can grow from roots or cuttings.

## Distribution

In Queensland, Blackberry occurs in the Stanthorpe, Warwick, Killarney and Toowoomba areas.

Native raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius* and *Rubus rosifolius*) also occur in South East Queensland; these are not invasive pests.

## Control

### Managing blackberry

The GBO requires a person to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks posed by blackberry. This fact sheet provides information and some options for controlling blackberry.

Maintenance of dense cover or pasture will prevent blackberry seedlings from establishing.

For established plants, herbicide treatment is the most practical control method; however, for isolated plants, physical removal of the crown and root system will be effective.

### Mechanical control

Pull out small plants and ensure proper disposal by burning or putting into black plastic bags to rot down.

Slashing, cultivation and burning where appropriate followed by planting of competitive pastures or replanting with native vegetation, will control blackberry.

### Biological control

A rust fungus can attack some blackberry species. The fungus will not kill the plant, but will cause defoliation, reducing the plant's aggressiveness and rate of spread. The rust alone cannot be relied upon to give adequate levels of control.

### Herbicide control

Before purchasing or using any herbicide always read the label carefully. Exclusion or withholding periods may apply in some situations for certain herbicides. Herbicides registered for blackberry control are listed in Table 1. All herbicides must be applied strictly in accordance with the directions on the label.

Herbicide application is ideal as a follow up to mechanical control (up to 75% of the plant mass may be dead stems) as this will reduce herbicide use and improve plant uptake of herbicide.

### More information

More information is available from your local government or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).



Blackberry infestation



Blackberry flowers



Blackberry fruit



Blackberry leaves

**Table 1. Herbicides for the control of blackberry**

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Non-agricultural land, rights-of-way and irrigation channels/banks	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Roundup)	1.0–1.3 L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Apply when plant actively growing.
Pastures		1.0–1.3 L/100 L water	Non-selective herbicide. Spot spray only and ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Agricultural noncrop areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 600 g/L (e.g. Garlon® 600)	170 mL/100 L water	Apply during time of active growth—spring to autumn. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Conqueror)	350 or 500 mL/100 L water	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Use higher rate on plants damaged by livestock or insects or known to be hard to destroy (consult label).
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L + Aminopyralid 8 g/L (e.g. Grazon Extra)	350 or 500 mL/100 L water	Blackberry in association with dpcks, ragwort, smartweed, thisles. Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Use higher rate on plants damaged by livestock or insects that are known to be hard to destroy (consult label).
Pastures and rights-of-way	Metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (e.g. Brush-off®)	10 g/100 L water, plus 100 mL wetting agent/100 L water	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems.
Agricultural noncrop areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 200 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Slasher®)	500 mL/100 L water plus wetter	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Always add an adjuvant.
Agricultural non-crop areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 200 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L + Aminopyralid 25 g/L (e.g. Tordon® RegrowthMaster)	500 mL/100 L water plus wetter	Apply during late spring to autumn when actively growing. Ensure complete plant cover including foliage and stems. Always add an adjuvant.
Non-agricultural areas (native pastures), commercial and industrial areas and rights-of-way	Aminopyralid as K salt 375 g/kg + Metsulfuron-methyl 300 g/kg (e.g. Stinger)	20 g/100 L plus Uptake Spraying Oil (500 mL/100 L) or Pulse Penetrant (200 mL/100 L)	Spray to thoroughly wet all foliage and stems. Ensure peripheral runners are sprayed. Follow-up applications over at least two seasons are essential for complete control. Due to widespread picking of blackberries by the public, it is not recommended to apply to bushes bearing mature fruit.
Grazing pastures, forests and rights-of-way	Picloram as tea 20 g/kg (e.g. Tordon Granules®)	45 g/m <sup>2</sup>	Residual for root application. Do not apply when plant may be stressed (not actively growing). Do not use within a distance of twice the height of desirable trees.

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

