Giant bramble

Rubus alceifolius

Giant bramble is a native of South-East Asia. When and why it was introduced into Australia is not known.

The plant forms dense, impenetrable thickets due to its ability to grow vegetatively and its barbed canes. It readily invades developing pastures, particularly on newly cleared land, which reduces pasture productivity and access to water. It will encroach onto roadways, hindering access to useful areas, and spread into disturbed rainforest areas.

Legal requirements

Giant bramble 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 measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control.

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

Description

Giant bramble is a vigorous, scrambling, perennial shrub, capable of covering other plants and forming dense thickets. It readily invades pastures, roadsides, and other cleared areas in the Wet Tropics of Queensland. Giant bramble is often confused with a native bramble, commonly called ‘wild raspberry’, which is similar but has a differently shaped leaf.

The stems of giant bramble become thick canes, up to 5 m long, covered with a felt of brown hairs and hooked prickles. They are erect at first, then arch and scramble over other plants, taking root where they reach the ground and producing daughter plants. The leaves are large and alternate, green above and velvety brown below (due to a dense covering of hairs). There is a deep notch at the base of each leaf and about seven shallow but finely serrated lobes.

The flowers are white, in clusters at the ends of short secondary canes, and the fruit is an edible ‘berry’, which is red when ripe.

Queensland Government

Life cycle

Seeds germinate at any time of the year (providing moisture is available), but mainly in December–January. Flowers are produced in July, developing on short secondary canes that are produced in the second year of the plant's growth. Fruits ripen in September–October, with new primary canes developing from the rootstock as this occurs.

Dispersal

The spread of giant bramble occurs when birds and animals eat the succulent fruit and void the seed through their droppings. Localised spread and an increase in density occur when canes take root and produce daughter plants.

Distribution and habitat

Giant bramble is found in the Wet Tropics of north-eastern Queensland, between Tully and Cairns, mainly in the lowlands and foothills, and on the wet, eastern edge of the Atherton Tableland. It in habits wet gullies, creek banks, the perimeter of rainforest areas and the edges of logging tracks and roadsides.

Control

Herbicide control

Herbicide can be applied as an overall spray during the early flowering period. Make sure that the leaves and stems are thoroughly wet. Penetration of thick clumps may be difficult and re-spraying may be required.

Four herbicides are currently registered for giant bramble, two of which requires tank mixing. See Table 1 for details.

Mechanical control

Regular slashing will hinder growth and will give varying degrees of control if the plants are slashed before they are able to seed. Cultivating can be used as a control technique with varying degrees of success.

More information

More information is available from your local government or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of giant bramble

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
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) or Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L + aminopyralid 8 g/L (e.g. Grazon Extra)	500 mL/100 L water + wetting agent	Overall spray when actively growing
	Picloram 240 g/L (e.g. Stuka Flexi)	210 mL/100 L water plus 250 mL triclopyr (600 g/L) as tank mix + wetting agent	
	Aminopyralid 240g/L (e.g. Grindstone)	20 mL per 100 L water plus 500 mL per 100L picloram 100 g/L + triclopyr 300 g/L (e.g. Fightback) as tank mix + wetting agent	

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

02/24