

Common sensitive plant

Mimosa pudica



Common sensitive plant competes with many tropical crops. It is especially troublesome in areas where hand-pulling is practised, as its thorns can cause painful wounds.

Common sensitive plant can also be a pest in tropical pastures where grazing is restricted due to high plant populations and the plant's sharp prickles.

Legal requirements

Common sensitive plant 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 common sensitive plant. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Description

Common sensitive plant is a low, sprawling, perennial plant which usually grows about 15–45 cm high. Its round, often woody stems are reddish brown or purple and have short, curved prickles.

Leaves are dark green, feathery, fern-like and divided into one or more pairs of segments near the end of the leaf stalk. Each segment is divided into 10–25 pairs of leaflets. These small leaflets close when disturbed or injured.

Flowers are pale pink or purplish pink in fluffy balls and are about 1 cm wide. They are on short stalks in leaf forks and develop into clusters of seed pods.

Seed pods are 2–3 cm long with stiff bristles along the edges and have 1–5 seeds. Pods eventually break up into one-seeded pieces and the seeds inside are flattened, small, and 3 mm in diameter.



Queensland
Government

Habitat and distribution

Common sensitive plant is a native of tropical America, introduced into Australia as a curiosity plant in gardens. Common sensitive plant has since escaped and is now found all along the Queensland coast, mainly in the wetter areas of the tropical north.

Common sensitive plant is a weed of disturbed and cultivated areas, such as roadsides, vacant allotments, heavily grazed pastures, crops and lawns. Common sensitive plant grows on a wide variety of soils and can stand considerable shading.

Spread

Common sensitive plant is spread mainly by seeds clinging to people and animals. Seeds can remain viable for many years.

Control

In pasture situations, dicamba and fluroxypyr can be used to control common sensitive plant (see table below).

Thorough wetting of all leaf surfaces is essential. If plants are disturbed before spraying, the leaves will fold up and the herbicide will be ineffective.

Ensure all spraying is done with forward booms or ahead of operators with knapsack sprayers.

More information

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

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of common sensitive plant

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Between cropping applications (conservation tillage)	Dicamba 700 g/kg (e.g. Cadence WG)	230–400 g/ha	Apply to seedlings Use high rates on larger plants (consult label)
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Fluroxypyr 333 g/L (e.g. Starane Advanced) And other formulations	300 mL/100 L water For other formulations (consult label)	Seedlings and young plants up to flowering Add a spraying oil (e.g. Uptake) Do not disturb plants before spraying Legumes present at time of spraying will be killed
	Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L + aminopyralid 8 g/L (Grazon Extra)	200 mL/100 L water plus wetting agent (consult label)	Foliar spray Do not disturb plants before spraying Legumes present at time of spraying will be killed
	Triclopyr 300 g/L + picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Conqueror)		
Established grass pastures	Fluroxypyr 333 g/L (e.g. Starane Advanced) And other formulations	900 mL/ha For other formulations (consult label)	Boom spray Add spraying oil (e.g. Uptake)

¹Banvel 200 is also registered for many other invasive plants in pastures and non-crop situations. Refer to label for appropriate rates. If treating other invasive plants in pastures with Banvel 200 common sensitive plant may also be controlled.

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

