

Narrow-leaf Cotton Bush

Gomphocarpus fruticosus

Spreading rapidly in the Chittering, Bullsbrook and Gingin areas in the last few years, a co-ordinated approach by all landholders is needed to slow its spread.



What can I do? You can help to slow its spread by removing flowers and seed pods from any plants growing in your area. Seed pods and seeds should be placed in a bag and sealed before being buried deeply (in the local council landfill site is suitable) or burnt.

Control may be by hand pulling, slashing, burning and herbicide use depending on the size of the plants and infestation and the stage of development of the plants. If hand pulling avoid contact with the milky sap as it may cause a rash or other symptoms. Ensure all the roots are removed to prevent suckering.

If slashing try to minimise the spread of seed and dispose of material in the infested area if possible. Burning in-situ will damage seed on or close to the soil surface and reduce the seed bank in the soil. Follow up control of seedlings and re-growth will be needed.

For more detailed information on the control measures suitable for cottonbush in various situations see *Farmnote 498 Narrow-leaf cottonbush and its control* available from the Department of Agriculture and Food website www.agric.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Chittering Landcare Centre.

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WANTED

DEAD or ALIVE



STOP THE Cottonbush PLAGUE

- Beheaded
- Shot with a spray gun
- Drawn, Quartered and buried
- 6 feet under never to rise again

Let us know of your success stories to claim your gold star.
Chitteringlandcare@iinet.net.au
or 9571 0400



It is native to Africa and was introduced to Australia as a garden plant. Now it is a significant weed in the southwest of Western Australia. It displaces useful species such as clover in pastures and is toxic to stock and humans. The green plant is unpalatable to livestock and is generally not eaten. Deaths do occur if stock eat cottonbush contaminated hay. It also invades riparian areas and displaces native species.

It is a perennial shrub up to 2m tall with long narrow opposite leaves. It flowers in October to April followed by swollen soft-spined pods with tapering points. The ripe pods then split to release numerous seeds each with a tuft of white silky hairs on its end. The hairs allow the seed to be carried a long distance on the wind. Seeds may also be spread by water, on animals, people and machinery and in contaminated fodder. Seeds usually germinate in spring or autumn but can germinate whenever it is warm and moist. Suckers are also produced from the lateral roots and dense thickets may be formed.



Green seed pods

Open ripe seed pod with fluffy seeds

White pendulous flowers

