

Spanish Heath

Shrub

Erica lusitanica

- Spanish heath is an upright, woody shrub that usually grows to around 2.5 m tall, but can get as tall as 3.5 m.
- It has lots of stiff, narrow leaves.
- Masses of small white or pale pink, tube-shaped flowers are produced between May and December.
- Plants will typically carry seeds from September through to March.



Declared weed under the Biosecurity Act 2019



Tube-shaped flowers

REMOVING SPANISH HEATH

By hand

Seedlings and small plants can be hand pulled in moist or sandy soil. Take care as plants break off easily and if there are any remaining roots in the soil it will grow again into a new plant. Removed plants can be left on site to break down.

Cut stump method

Cut stems as low to the ground as possible and paint undiluted Glyphosate herbicide on the stump within 15 seconds.

Foliar spraying

Foliar spraying is when you directly spray the leaves of a plant. This method can be highly effective but it is generally limited to smaller plants and regrowth. Several herbicides work well on Spanish heath including Metsulfuron-methyl (eg. Associate) which is practically non-toxic. The addition of a wetting agent, such as Pulse Penetrant, will help the herbicide be absorbed by the plant. For spraying to be effective, cover all the leaves with herbicide.

Spanish heath can be confused with some native shrubs. Care should be taken to correctly identify Spanish heath before any control methods are used.

IMPACTS

Spanish heath is commonly found on degraded pastures, neglected areas, and roadsides. It also invades native vegetation types including wet forest, dry forest, grassland, and riparian areas. It is generally found where there has been some soil disturbance, but it can also invade our more natural places. In agricultural settings Spanish heath can reduce a farms productivity, while in native bushland Spanish heath can replace our native species. Large areas of Spanish heath also increase fuel loads and add to fire hazards.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD

Spanish heath spreads by seed which is dispersed by wind and water, by slashing, and when soil and mud containing seeds is moved around the landscape by vehicles machines or shoes.

