Honey locust (Gleditsia triacanthos)

Weed management guide

Weed type
Tree

November 2022

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west

In NSW, weeds are regulated by the NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty to contain the spread of weeds.

"General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable)."

The Regional priority for Honey locust is to protect assets from the weed's impacts and to prevent its arrival and establishment in the region. In order to achieve this, Land Managers are asked to:
Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land and reduce impacts on priority assets. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.

For further information, contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via Central West Local Land Services or visit NSW WeedWise.

NSW WeedWise

Habit and description

Honey locust is a deciduous, leguminous tree that can grow up to 25m tall. The leaves of this plant are compound and grow as twelve pairs of opposite leaflets, measuring approximately 20cm long. Spikes more than 10cm long are found on its trunk and limbs. Its yellow flowers are about 10 cm long and hang as clusters. These develop into brown pods up to 30cm long which have a sticky pulp that are attractive to livestock. Honey locust prefers alluvial flood plains although it can also survive extreme drought conditions.

Photo: © Wendy Bushell | NSW DPI

Photo: © M. Fagg | Atlas of Living Australia

Photo: © H. L Hadobas | Atlas of Living Australia

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Reproduction and spread

The tree can reproduce via seeds or by vegetative suckering. The seeds are spread by foraging livestock as well as birds. Its tendency to thrive in riverine environments are to its advantage as this also helps its seeds disperse (The State of Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 2020). Root parts can still provide regrowth even when the upper parts of the plant are cut.

Impacts

Agriculture

- When allowed to proliferate, it destroys pastures by smothering desirable grass species.
- The spikes on this plant can injure livestock. It also damages tyres, thus restricting vehicle movement in its vicinity.

Native vegetation

- It can outcompete native vegetation and forms dense stands near waterways.
- Combined with its spikes and proximity to water sources, the plant restrict access of wildlife to water.

Management

Chemical

- Spot spraying can be used on young seedlings
- Cut and paint and stem injection can be used for older, woody plants
- Seek the guidance of an experienced Weeds Officer for expert advice on herbicide use.
- Visit www.apvma.gov.au for a list of registered products, product labels and permit requirements.
- NSW DPI (2021) provides a list of recommended herbicides for the control of Honey locust at https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/HoneyLocust.

Non-chemical

- Non-chemical controls are advised in conjunction with chemical applications.
- Bulldozing can control the plant but stumps and roots will react by aggressively growing so cultivation, spraying, and cropping are recommended for follow-up treatments.
- Grazing can be implemented against seedlings as well as regrowth that have not produced seed pods yet.
- Planting suitable pasture or crops will help suppress seedlings as well as regrowth.

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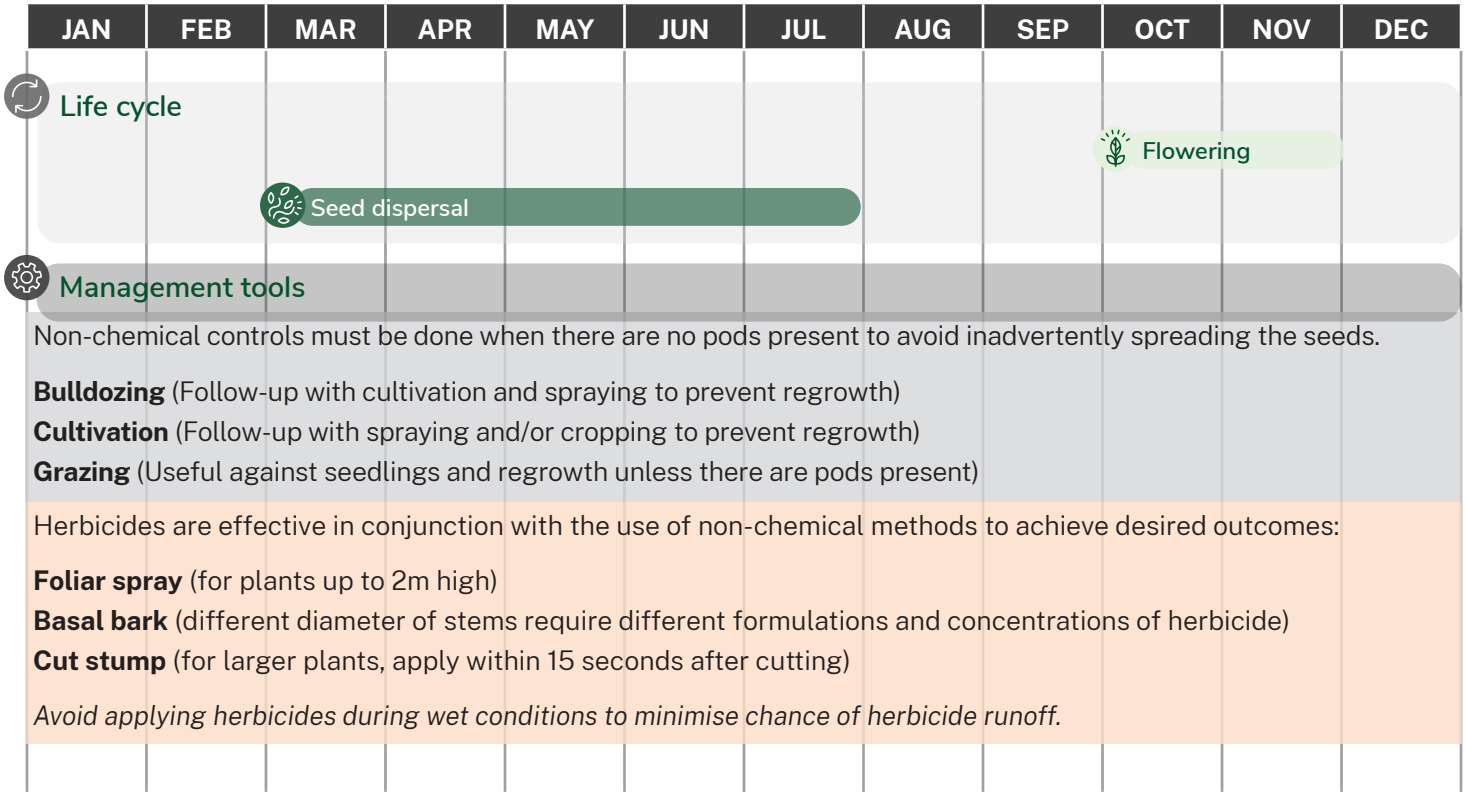
Tree

Management calendar



Non-chemical controls must be done when there are no pods present to avoid inadvertently spreading the seeds.

Bulldozing (Follow-up with cultivation and spraying to prevent regrowth)
Cultivation (Follow-up with spraying and/or cropping to prevent regrowth)
Grazing (Useful against seedlings and regrowth unless there are pods present)

Herbicides are effective in conjunction with the use of non-chemical methods to achieve desired outcomes:

Foliar spray (for plants up to 2m high)
Basal bark (different diameter of stems require different formulations and concentrations of herbicide)
Cut stump (for larger plants, apply within 15 seconds after cutting)

Avoid applying herbicides during wet conditions to minimise chance of herbicide runoff.

Optimal control options may vary depending on your location and climate. Consult an experienced Weeds Officer based in your local government area for control methods suited to your conditions.

All herbicides must be used in accordance with the herbicide label and permit requirements.

Further information

For more information on your general biosecurity duties, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity.

For the best guidance on how to meet this duty on your property, contact your expert Weeds Officer at your local council or via Local Land Services www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west.

NSW WeedWise

References

NSW DPI. (2017). *Weed categories*. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weed-categories

The State of Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. (2020). *Honey locust (Gleditsia triacanthos)*. Queensland Government. https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/58918/honey-locust.pdf

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