

# Green cestrum

(*Cestrum parqui*)

Regional priority weed objective: Containment

Green cestrum was originally introduced into Australia from South America as an ornamental shrub for gardens. Since that time, it has become naturalised in areas of south-eastern Queensland, eastern NSW and parts of Victoria and South Australia.

## Impact

Green cestrum is a vigorous plant that can out-compete other vegetation and is toxic to animals, including cattle, sheep, horse, pigs, poultry and humans.



## Toxicity

This plant frequently causes 'sudden death' in livestock and is highly toxic to humans, capable of causing serious illness or death.

## Riparian zones

Predominantly spread by birds and water movements, undertaking regular monitoring and maintenance along riverbanks, creek lines and watercourses will limit the spread and ensure that subsequent generations of this plant are adequately controlled. These practices minimise future biosecurity risks associated with the plant and ensure landholders fulfil their General Biosecurity Duty in regard to its control.

**Description:** Green cestrum is a medium-sized perennial shrub growing to 2-3m. It usually has many light green brittle stems.

**Leaves:** The shiny green leaves are 20-30mm wide and 80-100mm long. They have smooth edges, are pointed at each end and are arranged alternately along the branch. The leaves produce a pungent, foul smell when crushed.

**Flowers:** Flowers from late spring to autumn. Normally yellow but may have a green tinge. They grow in clusters at the end of branches, and produce an unpleasant perfume during the day but can smell quite sweet in the evening. Individual flowers are 20-25mm long and trumpet-shaped, opening into five, six or seven small, triangular lobes.

**Fruit:** Clusters of shiny, black, egg-shaped berries 7-10mm long are produced during summer and autumn. The berries each contain several wrinkled seeds about 3-5mm long. The dark pulp of the berries will stain fingers a purple colour if they are squashed. Berries remaining on the bush during winter will shrivel and become dull black or grey.

**Habitat:** Normally found along watercourses and in non-crop areas where it usually grows in small to medium-sized thickets.

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## Declaration and control

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These weeds are widely distributed in parts of this region. While broadscale elimination is not practical, minimisation of the biosecurity risk posed by these weeds is reasonably practicable.

It is recommended that all plants be removed to avoid any livestock deaths from poisoning. Any new stock unfamiliar to this plant are at risk, as well as animals inclined to feed on it in times when other feed is not readily available.

### Control

Effective management of Green cestrum requires a combination of control techniques and frequent follow-up work. It can have vigorous regrowth from stumps or roots that have not been removed, and from seed. Treated areas should be monitored for regrowth and, if necessary, retreated using another form of control.

New infestations should be destroyed before they flower and produce fruit.

### Physical control

Green cestrum can be controlled by repeated cutting down, digging or pushing out by mechanical equipment. All the yellow roots must be removed and destroyed appropriately to prevent regrowth. The roots can be burnt.

### Chemical control

Herbicides are often the most effective and economical way of controlling Green cestrum, however only a registered herbicide should be used to control Green cestrum infestations.

For a list of registered herbicides and application methods see the Noxious and Environmental Weed Control Handbook available at the Industry and Investment website:

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/noxious-enviro-weed-control](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/noxious-enviro-weed-control)



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