

Khaki Weed (Alternanthera pungens)

Reducing their impact in the Northern and Yorke Region



Khaki Weed (*alternanthera pungens*) is a creeping herb with a perennial woody taproot and annual aboveground growth. Prostrate stems are reddish with soft, silky hairs. Stems grow to 60 cm long and can develop roots where stem nodes touch the soil.

Leaves are numerous and grow in opposite pairs of unequal size up to 4 cm long.

The oval shaped leaves are green with red-purple veins.

Flowers appear mainly in summer and autumn. The flowers are very small and occur in clusters in the axils of the leaves. The flowers are surrounded by sharply-pointed, chaff-coloured bracts.

Fruit is a prickly chaff-coloured burr about 1 cm long. Seeds germinate in the spring but can also germinate in response to summer rain.

The taproot and stems develop over spring and summer, with all above-ground growth dying off in late summer. New growth is produced from the tap root in the following spring.

What damage does it do on your property?

Khaki Weed is a problematic pest plant in irrigated pastures. It competes well in established pastures and benefits from summer moisture.

The spiny burrs damage the feet and mouths of stock and degrade wool quality.

The plant may be poisonous to stock, rarely eaten. Competes strongly with established lawns. The burrs cause injury to hands and feet.

Control Methods

What can you do?

A long-term control program is required to tackle Khaki Weed because of the abundant and persistent seeds and robust tap root.

Hygiene Practises

Good hygiene practices for the movement of stock, hay, seed, produce and machinery greatly reduce the possibility of new infestations.

Mechanical

Cultivation, hoeing/hand pulling can be effective if the crown and the taproot is removed. Care is required to avoid fragmenting the tap root from which new plants can grow.

Chemical

Herbicides should be applied when the weeds are actively growing. Control treatments must be applied persistently, without missing a year, until the infestation is eradicated.

Consult the PIRSA SA Weed Control for these control options and application rates. Contact us for a copy or find it online at https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/managin g_weeds

Khaki Weed	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
Germination/												
Present												
Active												
Growth/												
Flowering												
Fruiting/												
Seeding												
Optimal												
Treatment												



Pest plants - whose responsibility?

Pest plants don't recognise property boundaries. Pest plants don't recognise property boundaries. By working collaboratively, The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and landholders have the best chance of controlling priority pest plants.

On private land

Landholders have a legal responsibility, under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* to control declared plants on their land.

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On roadside reserves

Roadsides are part of public road reserves, which are owned by the Crown. Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*, regional Landscape boards are responsible for the control of declared pest plants on roadside reserves.

Landholders have the opportunity to control declared plants on road reserves adjoining their property. Where control work is undertaken by the local board, an account may be issued to landholders.

Before undertaking control work on road reserves, landholders should contact their local LandscapeSA office to determine if any approvals are required. Care should also be taken to avoid any off-target damage to native vegetation.

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board can provide the following support to landholders

- A free weed identification service
- Advice about the most appropriate management method for pest plants on their property.

More Information and Other Resources

- SA Weed Control Handbook (PIRSA) https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/ managing_weeds
- Managing weeds
 https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds

Contact us

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