

CONTROL OPTIONS FOR

EASTER CASSIA

Senna pendula var. *glabrata* Other common name: Winter Senna

Easter Cassia was brought to Australia from South America - to be a bright easily grown garden shrub. It is now a common and widespread environmental weed in south east Queensland and northern New South Wales, and also invades native pasture.

A WIDESPREAD WEED IN THE GYMPIE REGION. TAKE CONTROL OVER THIS WEED BEFORE IT BECOMES A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM.

THE PROBLEM

Easter Cassia can out-compete native plants due to its prolific seeding and rapid growth rate. It has invaded disturbed and undisturbed areas and has become a weed of waterways, gardens, disturbed sites, waste areas, roadsides, closed forests, forest margins and urban bushland. It grows anywhere and everywhere.

In Autumn its bright yellow flowers are highly visible in native bushland, disturbed areas, and along road sides throughout the Gympie region. In grazing and farming areas it reduces feed quality and hinders movement of stock and machinery.

How the weed spreads

Easter Cassia's showy flowers produce abundant seeds. The seeds are dispersed by flowing water, or moved in contaminated soil or with dumped garden waste, and are readily spread by birds.

Home gardens have been the major source of this weed's spread. To prevent the further spread of Easter Cassia collect seed pods and dispose of them at a waste disposal facility or solarise them. It is strongly recommended to remove the plant from your garden.

Learn to recognise Easter Cassia

Easter Cassia is a spreading or sprawling shrub typically 2 to 4 metres high. Young stems are green and sparsely hairy, but become brown and woody on older growth. The alternately spaced compound leaves have 3 to 6 pairs of leaflets.

In Queensland the shrub can flower all year round, with flowering most prolific around Easter. The bright yellow flowers grow in clusters at the tip of branches and are about 30mm across. The flowers give rise to hundreds of slender seed pods up to 12cm long. Pods are green when young, but become brown when mature. Each pod contains 5 to 40 black irregularly shaped seeds.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The easiest form of control is prevention. Recognise the young plants and remove them before they set seed. With the shrub able to flower and set seed year round in Queensland, this requires constant vigilance.

Physical control

Hand-pull small individual plants, particularly in moist soil, remove roots and in gardens thickly apply mulch to discourage regrowth.

Dig out larger plants with a mattock or similar garden tool. The plant will reshoot if the whole crown is not removed. Carefully dispose of waste plant material – transport it to a waste disposal facility, burn it, bury it, or chip and mulch it!

Seeds are long-lived. Check for regrowth for at least 3 years.

The initial plants will have grown from water or bird dispersed seeds. Re-infestation is likely if the source plants are not controlled. Keep an eye out for young plants.

Chemical control

Chemical control is the most effective option for mature plants or larger infestations where physical control is impractical. In most instances glyphosate is the preferred herbicide.

Take care to avoid non target species and use glyphosate formulations with "frog-friendly" wetting agents. Read the label carefully as some "frog-friendly" wetting agents are dangerous to fish and may not be appropriate in stream side locations. Residual herbicides should be avoided in sensitive environments.

Read the herbicide label carefully and always use the herbicide in accord with label directions.

Herbicides permitted for the control of Easter Cassia

CUT STUMP	glyphosate (360 g/L)	undiluted	PERMIT 11463
BASAL BARK SPRAY	fluroxypyr (200 g/L)	35 mL per 1 L diesel or kerosene	PERMIT 11463

ALTERNATIVE NATIVE PLANTS FOR GARDENS



Native Golden Shower / Crown of Gold

(*Barklya syringifolia*)



TYPE	Tree to 8m in cultivation
ASPECT	Tolerates full sun to partial shade
SOIL	Suits well-drained & rich soils with good rainfall

One of the most spectacular flowering trees of our region and the floral emblem of Gladstone. *Barklya* is a common garden and street tree. As a member of the legume family it helps fix nitrogen in the soil. The leaves are shiny green and heart shaped with attractive bronze new growth at the tips. In summer the tree produces showy sprays of spectacular and fragrant golden-yellow flowers. The fruit that follow are brown, flattish pods, ripe April to May. Slow growing on poorer soils. Flowers once the plants are about 2 metres tall.

Wild May

(*Leptospermum polygalifolium*)



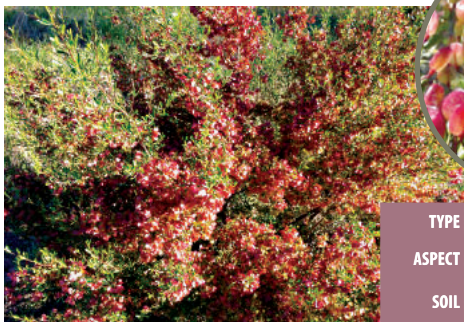
TYPE	Shrub 2m to 3m
ASPECT	Full Sun/Shade
SOIL	Sandy soil, tolerates clay

A hardy native shrub widely planted as a specimen plant and for informal screening. Its leaves are mildly aromatic and it produces a display of greenish off-white flowers every year. Valued in creek stabilisation plantings. Tolerates low level intermittent waterlogging but not permanently wet ground. Wild May can take light pruning but does not respond to heavy pruning or hedging.

Considerable variation and subspeciation throughout its natural range from north Queensland to southern New South Wales. The local variants tolerate light frosts and clay. *Leptospermum polygalifolium* subsp. *polygalifolium* (the local variety) is used to produce a medicinal honey like the NZ Manuka.

Wedge-leaved Hop Bush

(*Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *cuneata*)



TYPE	Shrub to 3m
ASPECT	Full Sun
SOIL	Adaptable, prefers well drained soil

A cosmopolitan shrub native to the Gympie Region. Hop Bush is extremely hardy. It's dense foliage and ability to re-sprout from the base makes it suitable for use as a hedge or screening plant. Its flowers are inconspicuous with no petals. The fruit capsules which change colour from cream-green to brilliant red are the stand-out feature of this plant.

Regular tip pruning promotes branching and growth.

Sticky Hop Bush was traditionally used by Aboriginal people to treat toothache, cuts and stingray stings. Early settlers used the fruit in place of hops.

Coffee Bush

(*Breynia oblongifolia*)



TYPE	Shrub to 3m
ASPECT	Full Sun/Shade
SOIL	Adaptable

An upright shrub to 3 metres high that is widespread across Queensland. Attractive soft grey-green leaves with rusty-red new growth. Inconspicuous green flowers with a 3mm diameter produced in late spring and summer. Flowers are followed by small pink to red fruits to 7mm in diameter, that grow on the undersides of the branchlets. The fruit's colour darkens as it ripens.

The leaves are food for the caterpillars of several Australian butterflies and moths. The fruit attracts fruit-eating birds.



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Gympie & District Landcare operate a community nursery and biocontrol raising facility. The site is attended Wednesday to Friday and Saturday mornings.



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