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## Tnews

VICTORIAN BLACKBERRY TASKFORCE

## CONTROLLING BLACKBERRY RESPONSIBLY

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce supports the control of blackberry in a sustainable manner.

### What does this mean?

When a blackberry management plan is developed, measures should be taken to minimise off-target damage.

Blackberries infest many areas including open paddocks, under storey and creek lines. These require different control and application methods.

Certain chemicals cause adverse effects on grasses, instream biota and native vegetation. It is the landholder's responsibility to make informed decisions on what chemical is used and how it is applied. There are regulations governing aerial application.

For example, when using aerial spraying as a control option, which is an efficient way of covering large open areas in a short amount of time, the potential for off target damage is high. Certain areas may not be a suitable for aerial spraying including areas of native over storey and riparian areas where ground based spraying would be a better option.

Make sure you check with your Local Council as a permit and offsets may be required if native vegetation is being destroyed or damaged.



AERIAL OFF-TARGET DAMAGE

### Community Service Announcements

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce has completed two campaigns of televised Community Service announcements (CSAs). January to March 2015 and October to December 2015 on Prime, Win and ABC television. The Taskforce has been pleased with the response and coverage of the campaign.

The VBT received an increase in enquiries during these periods, focusing on options for best practice blackberry control, land tenure clarification and the VBT's Community Partnership Program. The nature of enquiries relating to blackberry control in a diverse range of enterprises (small and large, organic) and land uses suggests there is a gap in readily available information on control options. These CSAs have been viewed state-wide in Victoria and regional NSW.

Based on the feedback received, two more CSAs will be produced focusing on blackberry management plans and best practice blackberry control and smaller lifestyle property owners. These will be aired during October to December 2016.



# Blackberryaction



DABYMINGA VOLUNTEERS TAKING A WELL-EARNED BREAK

## BLACKBERRY ACTION GROUPS ARE BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

**Dabyminga Blackberry Action Group** is successfully underway in the Dabyminga Catchment Region, signing 20 landholders to 3-year management agreements.

The group's activities include two community spaying days in February, in the northern and southern ends of the Catchment, Landscape Road and Reedy Creek respectively.

Private and public land were targeted with over 10 volunteers attending each day, applying 4,000 litres of chemical, using four spray units. These areas included cleared softwood plantations.

Further to this, the group's project officer, Rebecca Bowles, has completed 6 Good Neighbour applications on behalf of private landholders who share boundaries with Crown Land management.

**Merton to Cathkin Blackberry Action Group's** project officer, Cam Paterson, gave valuable information to land holders about 'best practice blackberry control' at a workshop hosted by the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network, targeting new and part-time landholders.

The event attracted 35 attendees to the Yea Shire Hall, and focused on a wide range of subjects, including weed control, planning, legal responsibilities, fire planning and preparation and stock selection. There was plenty of positive feedback, with one attendee commenting, 'Enjoyed the session on Saturday. I bought my hobby farm nearly 8 years ago and thinking back, if such a session was held at that time, it would have saved me so much time.'



COLLABORATION AT PHEASANT CREEK FLORA RESERVE

## 10 Years of Collaboration

Parks Victoria and the North East Blackberry Action Group have been working together for 10 years to deliver outstanding results in condition improvement to the Murray River Reserve upstream of Burrowye, in North East Victoria and to Pheasant Creek Flora Reserve.

Beginning with condition assessments to identify future works, a continuous annual program with a focus on blackberry control, was implemented to improve the conservation values of the Reserve. Large blackberry infestations along the Murray have been reduced to a level where an annual maintenance program is all that is now required.

The treatment program in Pheasant Creek is progressing and there is still a long way to go before the infestations are at a maintenance level.

In addition to blackberry and willow control other land management issues have been addressed including gully erosion, succession planting of ageing river red gum and revegetation establishment.

The integrated management approach, which has been very successful, will continue with an initiative to determine impacts of deer browsing on native species. The establishment of three deer exclusion sites in Pheasant Creek Reserve will provide data to assist in management decisions. The sites will be monitored for at least three years.

A strong, long term local commitment to working together to protect valuable community places in the Murray corridor demonstrates how collaborative efforts make a difference.

The impressive results have been achieved with grant support programs from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments and Parks Victoria funding.

## COMMUNITY STORIES: Central Otway's 'Reining in Blackberry' Foundation Project

In June 2014, a Landcare workshop was conducted, resulting in the formation of a Landcare Group and the Central Otway's Landcare Network (COLN), with Blackberry as a priority.

After receiving the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce's (VBT) community group Start-Up Kit, COLN obtained funding via the Victorian Landcare Grants and commenced the 'Reining in Blackberry' (RIB) Foundation Project.

The group's key focus is improving productivity on-farms and enhancing biodiversity in the Central Otway Landcare region. The project partners include Barongarook Landcare Group, Ridge Landcare Group, Colac Otways Shire, Plantation companies, Vic Roads, Parks Victoria & Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Jill Golland the project coordinator is acutely aware of the need for any pest program to reflect the community's needs. The program is signing landholders to 3-year blackberry management agreements and has provided advice and assistance.

Jill commented, 'It is important for the project to be tailored around the individual. We have a diverse range



FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS CONTROLLING BLACKBERRY

of landholders including dairy farmers, blueberry farmers, orchardists, organics, accommodation cottages and lifestyle's'.

To improve the outcomes of the project, the Network has engaged a Federal Government Employment Program and partnered with a Green Army team. The Green Army is removing blackberry by physical and chemical methods on Barongarook Creek and across the central Otways, and also preparing for replacement planting at these sites.

The VBT encourages community groups such as the Central Otway's Landcare Network to use the Community Blackberry Action Group Start-up Kit.

## PHYSICAL CONTROL, HOW USEFUL IS IT?



PHYSICAL CONTROL MEASURES CAN ENHANCE RESULTS

'Land managers use physical control measures as part of an integrated or stand-alone measure.'

The VBT continues to disseminate information on best practice blackberry control via the Weeds of National Significance Blackberry Control Manual. Physical control is an integral part of this by reducing chemical usage and improving access and can be part of an integrated or stand-alone measure. An integrated program may include the use of physical measures before applying chemical, but the VBT has found that some land managers are not allowing sufficient re-growth before application. The Blackberry Manual states that following any physical control measures, including slashing, there must be at least 50cm of re-growth before applying chemical. This allows enough products to translocate into the blackberry plant's extensive root system.

As many landholders, including organic farmers, are choosing non-chemical options, the VBT is keen to encourage best practice to achieve good results. Frequency and timing in applying physical control techniques as a stand-alone technique is the key. For instance, the VBT has received correspondence from people slashing once and then forgetting about it. To their surprise the blackberry bush grows back bigger, denser and stronger. The blackberry manual clearly outlines the need to use physical control measures every two to four weeks while the blackberry is actively growing. This ensures the blackberry is depleted of its energy resources.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Weeds Conference

The 6th WSV Biennial Weeds Conference will be held on the 7-9 June 2016 at Creswick, 'Celebrating 50 years of Invasive Species Management in Victoria'. Guest presenters will include Lee Mead, Melodie McGeoch and Geoff Carr. For more information, visit the Weed Society of Victoria's website - [www.wsvic.org.au](http://www.wsvic.org.au)

### Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action Group's Information Day - 'Mulcher in Action'

Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action Group held an information day attended by 40 people on the 16th of March at Phil and Christine Costello's property at Huon. The couple is participating in the North East Catchment Management Authority's Mentor Farm Program, demonstrating different application and control methods. These include a helicopter and mulcher. A follow up field day will be held to assess results.

### Next VBT Newsletter - Confusion around land tenure and responsibilities.

The next VBT newsletter will explore the general lack of understanding around land tenure and weed control responsibilities. Enquiries from the general public indicate the difficulties encountered when trying to determine who is responsible for weed management on a particular parcel of land. This is especially so in areas concerning easements and water courses.



MITTA TO MURRAY BLACKBERRY ACTION GROUP  
INFORMATION DAY - MULCHER IN ACTION

## Just announced

The Andrew's Creek Project is adding significant value to the Triangle Blackberry Action Group's achievements under the auspice of South Cathedral Group. The group has signed 106 landholders to voluntary blackberry management agreements after 3 years of operation.

The South Cathedral Group (SCG) successfully gained \$25,000 in funding from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority to improve the biodiversity of a 2.5 km section of Andrews Creek, located in the township of Taggerty.

The project includes the control of blackberry and Japanese Honeysuckle and the construction and installation of bird boxes. Weed control commenced several weeks ago, with slashing implemented to improve access, followed by the application of an approved herbicide.



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