



WEED FACT SHEET



Lantana

Landana Camara

Image source (Robinson, 1991)



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OUR
COUNTRY

DESCRIPTION

Lantana is a woody shrub which forms dense thickets, and is one of the most commonly found weeds in South Eastern Australia. It is described as a *scrambler* because of its habit of scrambling across open areas of the landscape. Lantana has thick woody stems with coarse edges. Its leaves are also coarse and they have a pungent odour. The plant produces an inflorescence of colourful flowers which are usually pink, yellow and orange. The flowers then turn into small black/purple berries which are easily dispersed by birds.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Lantana is a huge threat to Australia's biodiversity because it is an aggressive plant which rapidly colonises canopy gaps and the margins of native forests. It grows so densely that it inhibits the survival of native species. It is often seen in *monocultures* where it is the only plant species surviving. Lantana is also *allelopathic*, which means it secretes chemicals into the soil to inhibit the growth of other species. It can survive with very little soil so it can easily take over hillsides and rocky outcrops which can create erosion problems if it is removed without a suitable erosion mitigation strategy. Lantana has been declared a weed of national significance (WoNS) and is one of Australia's 20 worst weeds.

CONTROL PLANS

Lantana is a relatively easy weed to deal with, as long as follow up secondary weed control and revegetation is undertaken if required.

Sturdy gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and eye protection should be worn to avoid scratches, blisters and eye injuries.

An integrated management plan is the best approach. Integrated control combines two or more methods, targeting vulnerable aspects of the weed's life cycle to achieve a more effective outcome. Lantana can be successfully controlled through a combination of pasture management, regeneration/revegetation, fire, mechanical or hand removal, herbicides and bio-control.

In most situations, integrated control, including follow-up control and revegetation, provides the only chance of a successful and cost effective outcome. In other words be prepared to be in it for the long haul.

METHODS OF CONTROL

The first step in any management effort should be to prioritise areas for control where success is most likely or the landscapes you are protecting are particularly valuable. These could be small infestations that can be removed completely, new infestations that have not yet spread, or areas of high value for production or conservation.

In our region (Saddleback Mt, Jamberoo NSW) we have found Lantana responds well to the cut and paint method. Firstly find the base of the plant and use loppers or a hand saw to cut the stem as low as possible to the ground. Then paint the stem with 100 percent Round Up (Glyphosate). This should be done within 30 seconds to prevent the cells from closing over and reducing the effectiveness of the application.



The material that you have cut away should be piled in small pieces off the ground on top of dead material such as sticks or bark. This is called rafting. Rafting prevents the stems coming in contact with bare soil and regenerating.

Lantana does respond to some herbicides that target woody plants, however, when Lantana dies, it takes a long time for the dead material to break down. In the meantime, a large amount of secondary weeds will have the opportunity to grow underneath the dying Lantana, including vines which will twine through the dead material. This is then much more difficult to manage!

Remember Lantana seed banks remain viable for at least four years, so follow-up control to kill seedlings before they mature is vital to ensure initial management efforts to control the parent bush are not wasted.

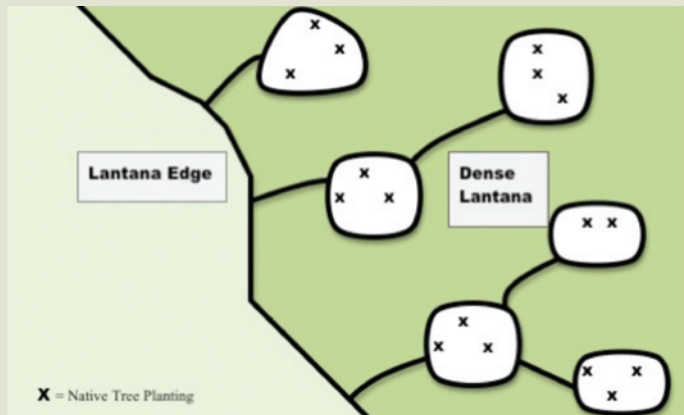
The Bradley Method of bush regeneration works well for Lantana.

1. Always work from good to bad areas.
2. Disturb the soil as little as possible and restore it to its natural condition.
3. Allow the rate of regeneration to dictate the rate of clearing.

Treatment of large infestations should always begin at the edges and other sparse areas and work towards the denser parts, particularly in areas of high priority.

“Lantana Starter Packs”

(Source: R. Scarborough, Landcare Illawarra)



To deal with dense infestations, we use the “Lantana Starter Pack” method. This involves creating a ‘patchwork’ of clearings throughout the lantana.

This involves crawling underneath the dense matter and cutting away the stems and foliage to create a 4-5 sq metre clearing of the Lantana. In these clearings you can plant some ‘starter packs’ of native trees. The idea is that these will grow tall and will eventually help to shade out the lantana and other weed species – requiring minimal effort.

Figs (*Ficus* spp.) are good if you need to stabilize the slope, and these can be accompanied by fast growing colonisers depending on the vegetation communities present (e.g. in a rainforest community, Kangaroo Apples *Solanum aviculare* are good starters). Bleeding Heart (*Omolanthus populifolius*) is also a fast growing coloniser that is good for using as a nursery species. Just maintain these small starter packs over time, to make sure the Lantana doesn’t overwhelm them. Eventually expand outwards from these clearings.



Whilst the Lantana is relatively easy to remove, it is the secondary weeds that generate from over-clearing and lack of follow up controls that are the long term risk to success.

The emphasis is to use shade from planted trees to help you, and to use fast growing rainforest species to maintain the understorey habitat and continue keeping other weed species out.

IN CONCLUSION

When replacing Lantana give priority to any native plants already growing there. If there are none or not enough examine which species are present in local rainforest remnants and plant densely with plants that are appropriate for the area. A mixture of pioneer plants, trees, shrubs and groundcovers can be used. If there is no danger of damage to nearby trees and shrubs, climbers can be used to cover dead Lantana and to provide food and shelter for wildlife.



Recommended websites for more information on Lantana

- Lantana Best Practice Manual and Decision Support Tool
<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/lantana/>
- Control of Woody Weeds
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/howyoucanhelp/controlOfWoodyWeeds.pdf>
- The Bradley Method of Bush regeneration
<http://asgap.org.au/APOL4/dec96-5.html>
- Lantana Biocontrol
http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_9158.htm