

## WILLOW CONTROL

### Why should we control willows ?

Willows are familiar sight in the Australian rural landscape. And while they have some recognised values such as providing shade, shelter and bank stabilisation, they are a serious threat to the health of the waterways, native vegetation and stream banks.

Willows cause erosion by diverting the flow of water towards the banks. They also reproduce rapidly through a prolific production of seed, or by broken branches taking root.

### How do I control willows ?

The most effective means of controlling willows is to completely remove them from the streambank. Removal should begin in the headwaters of the catchment, moving downstream. If possible, removal should be undertaken within a certain section, bounded by control points such as rock beds, culverts etc to minimise risk of erosion. Remove willows on straight sections first, then on the inside of bends, then on the outside bends.

- remove young willow seedlings **by hand**,
- **foliar spray**, Glyphosate (360 g/L) is registered for use as a foliar spray on trees up to two metres high at a rate of 1-1.3 L/100L water.
- **stem injection**, 1-2 mL of Glyphosate (360 g/L) injected into cuts around trunk spaced at 13 cm intervals
- **cut tree to a stump**, application of undiluted Glyphosate (360 g/L) immediately after cutting.

Any debris resulting from willow control should be removed immediately and the area revegetated with suitable plant species.

### Where do I start ?

#### First priorities

- Willows growing in midstream that block or divert water should be removed first.
- Willows that divert water flows into banks.

#### Then

- Damaged, brittle or old willows that drop branches
- Species that produce viable seed (see below).

### When is the best time to control willows ?

Chemical control should take place between December and March. The Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) recommend that willow clearing should be carried out in as short a time as possible, to be finished within three (3) years of approval.

## What are my legal obligations when removing willows ?

Approval must be obtained from DLWC before any vegetation is removed from within 20 metres of nominated waterways. DLWC's *Willow clearing guidelines for applicants* outlines the approval process and can be obtained from any DLWC office.

Approval must also be obtained for activity involving ground disturbance within 40 metres of a watercourse, (contact DLWC for more information).

Also seek advice about the restrictions on the use of weedicides near waterways of the *Clean Waters Act of NSW (1970)* from the DLWC.

*Remember: Revegetate the sites with appropriate native vegetation and regularly check site for spread of any new willows.*

## Species contributing to seed production

*Salix nigra*  
*S. alba* var *vitellina*  
*S. matsudana* x *S. alba* and clones  
*S. matsudana* 'Tortuosa'  
*S. rubens*  
*S. cinerea*  
*S. purpurea*  
*S. glaucophylloides*  
*S. viminalis*  
*S. fragilis*

## Species for urgent control and management

*S. alba* var *vitellina* x *S. fragilis*  
*S. babylonica*  
*S. caprea*  
*S. matsudana* 'Pendula'

## Further reading

*Willow Management Strategy for the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment*, June 1998; Willows Working Group of the ACT Environment Advisory Committee and Willow Working Group of the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Coordinating Committee.

## Who can help ?

Department Land and Water Conservation, Yass.  
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