

Herbicides for Besom Heath Control

Besom Heath (*Erica scoparia*)

These herbicide recommendations are made subject to the product being registered for that purpose under relevant legislation. It is the user's responsibility to check that registration, or an off-label permit covers the proposed use.

Always read the herbicide label.

If in doubt, visit the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) website at www.apvma.gov.au

Only herbicides registered for use in pasture and non-cropping situations are listed in the following table. **Care must be taken in using herbicides as non-target plants contacted may be harmed.**

For recommendations on specific crops consult an agronomist.

Penetrant

The Tamar NRM herbicide trial was undertaken using a silicone-based penetrant. 1020g/L Polyether modified polysiloxane. Brand names include Pulse, Sprinta or Devour. At a rate 200ml in 100L of water

Using the correct penetrant at the correct rate is as important as using the correct herbicide. Using a wetter or surfactant will not provide adequate control for besom heath.

Waterways and Wetlands

Be careful! Many herbicides can cause damage to waterways and wetlands. **Grazon Extra should not be used in waterways, wetlands and eucalypt and pine plantations.** Picloram remains active in the soil for extended periods and may leach into groundwater. It will also affect some native species that have roots under the treated area.

Check the herbicide label directions carefully before use near waterways and wetlands. For more information see Guidelines for Safe and Effective Herbicide Use Near Waterways. https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/herbicide_guidelinesFINAL2012.pdf

Herbicide Brands and Concentrations

Herbicides are referred to by the active chemical ingredient in the following table. The product trade names in this publication are supplied on the understanding that no preference between equivalent products is intended and that the inclusion of a product does not imply endorsement by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE) over any other equivalent product from another manufacturer. Information on available brands containing the herbicide you require should be obtained from a reputable herbicide supplier or the APVMA website at www.apvma.gov.au.

There may be several products with the same active ingredient but with alternate formulations (concentration) registered for control of a weed. Alternate formulations such as these will have a different application rate. Always check the label.

Foliar Spray Application

In October 2021 Tamar NRM undertook a herbicide trial at Bridgenorth Tasmania spraying besom heath, followed by 18 months of monitoring. This trial is now complete. The trial covered seven different woody weed chemicals with 14 different rates and combinations and treatment methods. The following control recommendations are based on current herbicide labels and off-label permits (Table 1):

Stage of growth	Active ingredient	Commercial example	Application rate	Withholding period	Comments
Late September/ early October (when plant is actively growing)	Triclopyr 300g/L, **picloram 100g/L, aminopyralid 8g/L	*Grazon Extra®	350-500ml/100L	Yes Follow label instructions	In accordance with APVMA permit PER84775 Must have all three active ingredients Use penetrant as per instructions below Will cause significant medium-term damage to other broad-leaved plants, please see the warning below
Late September/ early October (When plant is actively growing)	Triclopyr 600g/L Metsulfuron methyl 600g/Kg	Garlon 600®, Apparent Axeman 600 herbicide® DuPont Brush Off®, Nufarm Associate herbicide®, Apparent Bowsaw 600 herbicide®	170ml/100L PLUS 15g/100L	Not required when used as directed Not required when used as directed	***Dual tank mix (see instructions below) In accordance with APVMA permit PER84775 See -NRE Tas Chemical Information Sheet Use with penetrant as per instructions below

Table 1 - Foliar spray application control recommendations for besom heath are based on current herbicide labels and off-label permits

*Besom heath is not on the product label for these herbicides, however, a permit (number-PER84775) issued by the **Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)** allows this specific use. **If using this method and herbicide you will require a copy of this permit.** For further information on permit details visit the APVMA website at www.apvma.gov.au

**Note: Grazon Extra should not be used in waterways, wetlands and eucalypt and pine plantations. Picloram remains active in the soil for extended periods and may leach into groundwater. It will also affect some native species that have roots under the treated area.

*** **Dual tank mix**, Fill tank with 50% water and start agitating, add Metsulfuron, fill tank to 70 %, add Triclopyr, fill to 90% and add penetrant, finally add remaining water. Agitate while spraying and only mix enough for a day's spraying.

Warning: Grazon Extra (Triclopyr 300g/L, Picloram 100g/L, Aminopyralid 8g/L) Picloram and Aminopyralid two of the active ingredients in Grazon Extra remain active in the soil for extended periods of time (years). Be aware of using Grazon Extra in environmentally sensitive sites and broadleaf cropping situations (including clover). In bushland situations, Eucalypts are particularly sensitive to these chemicals. **Grazon Extra should only be used in situations where some medium-term off-target damage is acceptable.**

Spraying

Getting the best out of spraying!

Coverage

Besom heath is unforgiving of poor spray technique, low volume application and poor coverage. Even the slightest miss on a plant will result in the plant surviving the herbicide application.

Besom heath is best sprayed with a **high-volume spray, ensuring coverage is to dripping point.** A motorised spray unit capable of pressure set too 25-28 bar (360-400psi) is required for adequate canopy penetration and good foliar coverage. Smaller units such as quad bike-mounted units, and knapsacks do not achieve the pressure required for complete coverage.

Low volume sprays from a boom sprayer will not achieve the desired results.

Thorough coverage of the plant to the point of run-off is essential, however, avoid excessive spray wastage.

Timing

The Tamar NRM herbicide trial was undertaken in late September and early October and achieved good spray results for this period of active growth.

More work needs to be done to monitor plants treated outside this window to ascertain if results differ at different times of the year.

Leave sprayed plants undisturbed for 12 months prior to clearing.

Use clean water - if you wouldn't drink it don't use it for spraying.

Follow up, follow up, follow up. Do it annually.

Cut and Paint, Drill, and Frill

These methods of control are not recommended due to their being ineffective on young plants and the difficulty in reliably treating all stems on lignotubers.

In the Tamar NRM herbicide trials, cut and paint treatments were trialled. Larger plants (>1.2m) with less than 20 stems were successful, however, treatment of smaller plants (<1.2m) with more than 20 stems was generally unsuccessful. These plants recovered quickly and replaced the larger plants.

Cut and paint may be of limited use on large individual plants where there are many stems to be treated on a lignotuber. The labour required can be extensive, severely limiting the area that can be covered.

Important Disclaimer

This guide should be read in conjunction with the *Besom Heath Best Practice Manual* available from both NRE and Tamar NRM websites.

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