

Techniques for weed control

Weeds are 'experts' at colonising bare ground. They are fast growers that will out compete riparian plantings for light, nutrients and moisture. Good weed control while your plants are establishing will not only help with their survival, but will also promote early growth.

Options for weed control include hand-weeding, mulching, grubbing, slashing and spraying. Spraying is by far the most practical method in most situations.

Hints for successful spraying:

- Avoid spraying on a windy day.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and application rates carefully.
- Calibration of the spray equipment is essential to ensure correct application.
- Aim for a minimum of 1 metre of dead vegetation around each plant.
- Spray in an s-shaped pattern to avoid overlap (spraying in a spiral pattern concentrates the spray).
- A guard on the spray wand allows for spraying closer to plants. Alternatively, drop an old plastic container or pipe over each tree, so that the spray can be applied up to a few centimetres from the tree while avoiding any contact.

Source: Taranaki Regional Council

Removal of weeds

Common weeds to remove in Southland include bittersweet, blackberry, broom, Darwin's barberry, elderberry, gorse, reed sweet grass, Spanish heath, sycamore and willows (e.g. crack and grey willow).

Definition

'Releasing' is weed control undertaken post-planting. For best results, release spray at least once a year during summer. Don't wait until weeds are taking over. Smothered plants will not grow well.

Techniques for shrub and tree control

In some cases you may have to control shrub and tree weed species in your riparian zone. The following techniques can be used:

Cut and paste – useful for shrubs

1. Find the base of the plant.
2. Cut the plant level to the ground.
3. Paste with herbicide gel immediately.

Basal bark treatment – useful for trees & shrubs

This treatment involves applying herbicide to the base of trees or shrubs. A ready to use product (X-Tree Basal) is now available, or you

can make up your own solution:

1. In a glass jar, mix 80% vegetable oil with 20% neat glyphosate (Roundup).
2. Brush the mixture onto the base of the tree in a band that's 5-10cm wide all the way round.

Drilling – useful for trees

1. Drill multiple 10mm holes evenly spaced around the base of the tree on a downward angle. Make the holes as deep as possible without drilling through the tree.
2. Pour 10-25mls of neat glyphosate (Roundup) into each hole.

Manage weeds by:

- only spraying weeds impeding flows
- not spraying weeds on the banks as these help to stabilise the bank soil
- establishing flat, rather than steep batters on the banks. This helps to concentrate the flow of water, which helps to keep the central channel weed-free
- developing a nutrient budget to help reduce fertiliser loss to waterways