

Weed control techniques

There are a number of different ways to control woody and herbaceous weeds that might be toxic to horses. Hand pulling or physical removal may be suitable if the infestation is very small or isolated but the most economic way to sustain long-term weed control on your property is through herbicide application.

Foliar spray

Using a hand held spray gun, treat the foliage and stems of the plant. Ensure you treat the entire leaf area of the plant to the point of runoff so that the foliage is wet and the spray mix just beginning to drip from the leaves.

Basal bark application

Where stems are less than 5 cm diameter at the base, treat the whole circumference of the stem from the base up to a height of 30 cm using a hand held, low pressure spray pump.

Common toxic weeds

Weed	Product	Method of application
Heliotrope	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Paterson's curse	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Wild peach	Access® Herbicide	Basal bark or Cut stump
Oleander	Access® Herbicide	Basal bark or Cut stump
Rubber vine	Access® Herbicide	Basal bark or Cut stump
Mother-of-millions	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Crofton weed	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Lantana*	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Mistflower	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray
Fireweed	Grazon® Extra Herbicide	Foliar Spray

* Lantana toxicity varies by floral colour type and locality.

Cut stump application

Where stems are greater than 5 cm diameter at the base, cut stems off less than 15 cm from the ground, and apply herbicide immediately to the cut stump.

Grazing withholding period (WHP)

Always observed any grazing WHP specified on the product label. Even where no grazing WHP is specified horses should be removed from treated paddocks while toxic species die down as these may be more palatable following spraying.



Lantana



Protect your horses

from toxic weeds



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Pasture weeds can be highly dangerous

Throughout Australia, weeds continue to be a problem for farmers when managing their land. Their hardy nature and competitive growth habits of weeds not only make it difficult to maintain healthy pasture, but many common species of weed are also highly poisonous to horses.

As a horse owner, it is important to have an understanding of:

- What weeds are poisonous to your horses
- Whether they are acutely toxic causing death or have long-term deleterious effects
- How you can identify those weeds that are harmful
- How you can remove poisonous weeds from your property.

This can protect your horses from weed poisoning and help maintain a dense pasture, which is a far more economic way to meet the nutritional needs of your stock than investing in feed or supplements.

Managing weeds on your property

Pasture weeds can be difficult to remove however there are a number of actions that can be taken to help manage weeds on your property.

Know the poisonous weeds in your area

Knowing the difference between those weeds that are harmful and those that are not will allow you to remove dangerous weeds before they can cause damage to your stock.

Continually check for weeds

The key to economic weed control is treating the infestations before they grow into a larger problem. Maintaining a competitive pasture reduces the opportunity for weeds to take root.

Ensure borrowed equipment is clean

Ensure that any equipment or machinery is clean before it enters your property, as unclean equipment can carry soil containing plant seeds onto your pasture.

Symptoms of woody weed poisoning

Signs that your horse may have ingested toxic weeds include:

Food refusal	Muscle weakness
Weight loss	Diarrhoea
Skin sensitivity to sunlight	Incoordination
Abnormal respiratory rate	Skin irritation
Abnormal heart rate	Nervousness
Depression	Uncommon excitability
Head pressing	Sudden death
Stomach discomfort	Gait abnormalities
Muscle tremors	Paralysis

Quarantine new stock

Due to their fairly gentle digestive system, most weed seeds can pass through a horse and remain viable. This means that horses that had ingested seeds on other properties could potentially transport them to your pasture in their manure.

Please note: Poisonous plants may become more palatable after spraying and horses should be kept away from these plants until they have died down. Many plants remain poisonous after death, and horses should not be allowed access, as there is likelihood that they may graze the dead material. Such material should be burnt if possible.



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