

# Is gorse a threat to you?

Gorse is an incredibly flammable, prickly, dense, evergreen legume which can grow up to 4m high and 3m diameter.

## Gorse is a significant fire hazard because it:

- ▶ Contains high levels of natural oils making it extremely flammable.
- ▶ Can outcompete other plants, creating dense stands of connected fuel which assists fire travel.
- ▶ Can conceal fences, large rocks and other impediments to a fire crew's passage.
- ▶ Is a fine fuel with leaves less than 1.5mm wide, which can float and trigger fires to assets nearby.
- ▶ Is difficult to control when ablaze, due to the high radiant heat.
- ▶ Burns easily when green and even in wet conditions.

## Controlling gorse

Control gorse before flowering to avoid seed set and further spread.

**De-bulking:** Useful for large infestations. Plants can be slashed or mulched to reduce the bulk and increase accessibility for follow up treatment. Spray when regrowth is at least 40cm high.

**'Cut and Paint':** A useful control method on fence lines, isolated plants, outlying edges of large infestations and in sensitive areas to prevent off-target damage. Cut stems as low as possible and immediately smear the cut with a registered herbicide to prevent regrowth.

**Chemical treatment:** Useful on resprouting gorse and small to medium infestations. Use a registered herbicide and wetting agent to maximise uptake into plants, then do not disturb for at least 12 months. Choose only products registered for use in your situation and always read the label and follow the instructions carefully.

**Physical removal:** Use with caution as gorse can regenerate rapidly from disturbances. Hand-hoe or grub entire plants.

**Burning:** Should only be used if part of an integrated gorse control strategy. Burning can increase gorse density over time by stimulating seed germination and promoting vigorous regrowth from roots. If followed up immediately however, some seedbank may be reduced. [See pg. 40, Gorse – National Best Practice Manual](#). Check regulations and your local conditions if you intend to undertake burning in your strategy.

- Follow up control on resprouting and germinating gorse is key to preventing reinfestation.
- Follow up for at least two years before revegetating the land with grasses or shrubs.

Working across your local community can increase gorse control success, so connect with your [local Landcare group](#) for additional support.

Introduced from western Europe, gorse is now one of Australia's worst weeds, listed as a **Weed of National Significance (WoNS)**.

Under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, both public and private landowners are responsible for controlling the growth and spread of gorse.



Photo: CFA Wallan Brigade.

Gorse contains high levels of natural oils making it extremely flammable and difficult to control when ablaze, due to the high radiant heat.

## More information

- ▶ Visit [Landcare Victoria](#) to connect with your local Landcare group and find out what assistance might be available to control gorse in your community.
- ▶ Visit the [Country Fire Authority](#) for information on how to prepare your property for a bushfire.
- ▶ Visit the [Victorian Gorse Taskforce](#) for additional control suggestions, information around planning and an integrated approach to controlling gorse.



Created by the Victorian Gorse Taskforce (VGT) with support from the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Landcare Victoria Inc.

