Yellow bells

Tecoma stans

Yellow bells is densely branched shrub that can invade native bushland and roadsides. It has the potential to form dense thickets that exclude other vegetation.

Legal requirements

Yellow bells is a category 3 restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be given away, sold, or released into the environment. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO).

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on yellow bells. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

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Description

Yellow bells is a densely branched shrub that usually grows up to 5 m high, occasionally up to 10 m high.

Flowers are tubular, bright yellow, 3–5 cm long, tubular, in clusters at ends of branches. There are several faint reddish lines in the throat of the flower, which is slightly ridged and hairy.

Leaves are 10–25 cm long, with 2–5 paired leaflets along stem, oppositely arranged and are borne on slender petioles 1–9 cm long. Each leaflet is up to 10 cm long with serrated edges.

The fruit are bean-like pods, 10–30 cm long. These fruit turn from green to brown in colour as they mature and finally split open to release numerous papery seeds. The seeds are flat, oblong in shape, 7–8 mm long and about 4 mm wide and have a transparent wing at each end.

The bark is pale brown or reddish-brown with age. The the main stem bark is light brown to pale grey in colour, furrowed and becoming very rough in texture as the plant matures.

Life cycle

Yellow bells flowers mostly during spring but may also throughout the year.

Methods of spread

Yellow bells papery seeds can be spread by wind. It can also spread by floodwaters and in dumped garden waste.

Habitat and distribution

Native to tropical America, yellow bells prefers disturbed areas, grasslands, waterways and along roadsides.

Yellow bells can be found in coastal areas of northern and eastern Queensland and in Brisbane.

Control

Managing yellow bells

The GBO requires a person to take reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks posed by yellow bells.

Physical control

Seedlings can be hand-pulled. Larger plants are more difficult to control manually and can resprout from cut roots unless these are pulled up and burned after drying.

Repeat control is necessary to reduce reinfestations levels. Do not break taproot if removing by hand as regrowth is likely.

Herbicide control

Herbicide options available for the control of yellow bells in Queensland are in Table 1.

Two permits (PER11463 and PER12363) allow the use of various herbicide products to control yellow bells.

Prior to using the herbicides listed under the permits you must read or have read to you and understand the conditions of the permits. To obtain a copy of these permits visit apvma.gov.au/permits.

Landholders and contractors should check if the property is in a hazardous area as defined in the *Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966* prior to spraying.

More information

For more information contact your local government or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of yellow bells

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Registration details	Comments
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, fence lines, forestry, pastures and rights-of-way	Picloram 120 g/L + Triclopyr 240 g/L (e.g. Access)	1 L per 60 L diesel	Registered	Basal bark or cut stump. Some root suckering may occur.
Non-agricultural areas, domestic and public service areas, commercial and industrial areas, bushland/ native forests, roadsides, rights-of-way, vacant lots, wastelands, wetlands, dunal and coastal areas	Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L + Aminopyralid 8 g/L (e.g. Grazon Extra) or Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Conqueror)	350 mL to 500 mL per 100 L water plus wetting agent or spray oil	APVMA permit PER11463 (expires 30/04/2027)	Spot spray
	Fluroxypyr 333 g/L (e.g. Starane Advanced)	900 mL to 3 L per 100 L of diesel, kerosene or Biosafe		Basal bark
	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Roundup Biactive) and other formulations	1 L per /100 L of water. For other formulations consult the permit PER11463		Foliar spray Seedlings only
		1 L + 9000 mL per 20 L of water		Splatter gun at 5 mL/ 30 cm height or growing points.
	Metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (Kenso AgCare Ken-Met 600 WG)	10 g per 100 L of water + wetter		Foliar spray Seedlings only
		2 g per 1 L of water at 1 mL per 2 cm of hole or cut		Drill, frill, axe or stem injection
Natural ecosystems (non-agricultural)	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Weedmaster Duo)	1:50 (glyphosate:water)	APVMA permit PER12363 (expires 28/02/2030) for use by officers/ contractors of government agencies, QPWS, or NRM groups.	Aerial spot spray from helicopter or unmanned aircraft vehicles.

Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.