

Witchweed (*Striga* spp - all non-indigenous *Striga* species)



Declaration

(Code: C= City; S=Shire; T=Town)

Category : P1, P2

Location : For the whole of the State.

Standard Control Codes (these may vary for individual plants)	
<p>P1 REQUIREMENTS Prohibits movement</p>	<p>The movement of plants or their seeds is prohibited within the State. This prohibits the movement of contaminated machinery and produce including livestock and fodder.</p>
<p>P2 REQUIREMENTS Aim is to eradicate infestation</p>	<p>Treat all plants to destroy and prevent propagation each year until no plants remain. The infested area must be managed in such a way that prevents the spread of seed or plant parts on or in livestock, fodder, grain, vehicles and/or machinery.</p>

Control Method

<p>Recommended herbicides</p>	<p>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenoxy group eg 2,4-D and dicamba • Imazapyr • Glyphosate • Paraquat
<p>More information</p>	<p>:</p> <p>These are parasitic weeds that attach their roots to suitable host plants</p>



And other control measures	:	Use maximum label rates of these chemicals to kill and prevent plants from forming seeds. Once established, eradication is difficult.
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Weed Description

Family : Scrophulariaceae
Form : Parasitic herbaceous annual
Status : Not present in WA

Witchweeds are small herbaceous parasites that only grow on the roots of other plants. Witchweeds get all of their nutrients and water from their host plant. They are native across a wide area including Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia. They get their common name because they 'bewitch' their hosts.

Some witchweeds are very serious parasites of important grain crops such as corn (maize), sugar cane, rice and sorghum. They can reduce crop yields by up to 70%. They survive in non-cropping areas by living on grass weeds. One of the worst species, *Striga asiatica*, has been named as a target by the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS). *Striga asiatica* was found attacking corn in the south-east USA in the 1950s and the on-going eradication campaign has cost over US\$100 million.

Witchweeds could be confused with broomrapes (*Orobanche* species), another group of parasitic plants that attack crops and some of which are also declared. Please check the pictures on this page and the links. You can help by regularly inspecting crops to identify unusual weeds or symptoms such as thin or yellow areas within the crop. If any unusual plants are observed growing in these areas, pull out some crop plants and examine their root system. If other species of plants or any unusual growths are attached to the roots, mark the spot in some way so you can find it again.

Stems : Witchweeds are usually 15-30 cm tall, but can be taller.
Leaves : narrow, 1-3 cm long, inconspicuous.
Flowers : Witchweed flowers can be bright colours including red or purple, or plain white.
Fruits : After flowering, small, swollen seed pods form, each one containing thousands of minute seeds.
Seeds : The seeds are like specks of dust, only about 0.2mm long. Each witchweed plant can produce up to 50 000 seeds, they can last for 10 years or more in the soil.

NOTE: If one of the major pest witchweeds became established in Australia, it could threaten important grain markets – any infestations must be identified early and eradicated! Report it immediately to the nearest office of the Department of Agriculture and Food or call 1800 084 881, your call will be dealt with as a high priority.

Other relevant information related to this topic:

- [Quarantine WA](#)
- [Permitted and quarantine species list](#)
- [Permit for minor off-label-use of a registered agvet chemical product](#)
(Permit number – per9655)
- [Off-label permit \(olp\) for use of a registered agvet chemical product](#)
(Permit number - per4590)