

HOREHOUND CONTROL



Illustration courtesy of
Department of
Agriculture Tasmania

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) is a weedy member of the mint family which was introduced to Australia from Europe and western Asia during the last century. It is a troublesome weed of eroded areas and degraded pastures in South Australia and Victoria. Small infestations are found in similar environments in WA. From there it invades nearby pastures.

Horehound is a vigorous perennial plant. It competes with more valuable pasture plants for light, moisture and nutrients and imparts a bitter flavour to the meat and milk of animals which are given no other feed.

Horehound is a bushy spreading plant up to 0.6 metres high. It has four-sided woody stems and crinkled blue-green leaves covered with white downy hairs. The leaves are arranged in pairs on opposite sides of the stem.

The flowers are small and white. They are formed in dense whorls in the angle between the

stems and the leaf stalks. Seeds are contained in capsules each with 10 hooked spines at one end.

Horehound capsules are a major contaminant of wool because they are difficult and expensive to remove at processing. They may also cause stomach impaction in sheep.

Small infestations should be treated promptly. For more serious infestations, draw up a plan to control the weed over a number of years, integrating cropping, broadacre treatment and spot spraying.

As with most weed infestations, prevention is better than cure. Avoid introducing horehound seeds with agisted sheep and ensure goods and stock brought from other states are inspected and cleaned.

Control

Biological control	Under investigation, but unlikely to be of relevance to W.A.
Mechanical control	Grazing encourages horehound, as stock selectively graze competing pasture plants. However, multiple cropping tends to reduce the weed's density.

Chemical control

Bromacil (Hyvar X) [®]	KNAPSACK: 11g per litre	Leaves the ground bare for up to two years. Use to eliminate small areas of horehound which threatens to spread to adjoining pasture. DO NOT use close to desirable trees or shrubs.
2, 4-D ester (800 g/litre)	BOOMSPRAY: 3 litres per ha KNAPSACK: 3 ml/litre	Control of seedling and young horehound plants
2, 4-D amine (500 g/litre)	BOOMSPRAY: 4 litres per ha KNAPSACK: 4 ml/litre	Control of seedling and young horehound plants

Further Information

For advice in drawing up your horehound control program, contact your nearest Agriculture Protection Board district officer.