

## Management programme

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive containment	Sustained control	Site-led
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## Impacts

Economic	Biodiversity	Soil resources	Water quantity/quality
Human health	Social and cultural wellbeing	Amenity/recreation	Animal welfare

## Objectives

Keep gorse from impacting land free of or being cleared of it, including in wetlands, and the central North Island tussock-lands.

## Why is it a pest?

Gorse forms monocultures temporarily in many habitats, although it can persist in areas where it isn't overtopped and shaded out. It can be a serious problem over large areas, including in pasture where it reduces available grazing for livestock. It also grows along roadside verges, in sand dunes, cliffs, wetlands, scrub, river and forest margins and coastal habitats. Its ability to increase nitrogen in poor soil types (for example, in gumland or on sand dunes) can alter the types of plants that grow there, including specialised native plants like herbs, orchids, or low ferns. Gorse prickles can pierce skin and become infected and dense shrubs with prickly spines can obstruct access.

Gorse can have positive impacts on reverting pasture areas and bare ex-forest sites as it acts as a nursery crop for native species. Gorse opens up as it ages and dies, especially once it is overtopped and completely shaded. Replacement of gorse by native species may be less likely on dry sites.

Six separate biological control agents for gorse have been released within the Waikato region. The most successful of these has been gorse spider mite.

## Responsibility for control

**All occupiers in the Waikato region are responsible for controlling gorse on their property**

- All occupiers in the Waikato region are responsible for controlling gorse on their property within 20 metres of a shared boundary where that neighbouring land is being managed for pastoral production, forestry or environmental values (GNR GOR-1 of the **Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032**).
- No one in the Waikato region is allowed to propagate, release or spread within wetlands, gorse or any of the other species listed in Table 14 and 15, section 6.5.3 of the RPMP (rule WET-1).
- Occupiers are responsible for controlling all gorse on their property within 20 metres of the boundary of a wetland where that wetland is clear or being cleared of gorse or any of the other species listed in Table 14, section 6.5.3 in the RPMP (GNR WET-3). Occupiers need to be good neighbours and do the same so that the control efforts are not fruitless.
- Occupiers within the Project Yellow site-led area (Central North Island tussock-lands) are responsible for controlling all broom, gorse and tree lupin on their property within 20 metres of an adjoining property boundary where that adjoining land is being managed for those species (GNR YELLOW-1). Occupiers need to be good neighbours and do the same so that the control efforts are not fruitless.

**Gorse is banned from being sold, propagated, distributed, or included in commercial displays.**

## What does it look like?

A deep rooted, woody perennial that can grow up to 3m high.



### Flower

- Yellow pea-like flowers (13mm-20mm).
- Flowers mainly between May and November (occasionally all year around).



Photo: Forest & Kim Starr

### Fruit/seed

- Green flattened seed pods (13mm-25mm long), turn brownish black when ripe.
- Smooth rounded seeds are ejected from their pods up to 10m away.



### Leaves/stems

- Seedling's leaves are initially made up of three hairy leaflets.
- Later, the leaves of gorse take the form of deeply furrowed spikes.

## How can I control gorse?

Many herbicides are not effective on gorse because of the shape of the 'leaves' and the thick cuticles on the spines, which help prevent absorption of herbicides. However, gorse can be killed using herbicides like glyphosate, metsulfuron or triclopyr/picloram mix or stump treated with picloram or glyphosate gel.

### Physical control

Physical control includes removing plants by hand, or with tools and machinery. It has been found that when the plants are big, cutting at the base (at flowering time) and fraying the stumps causes the stump to lose moisture and generally kills the plant. As with many scrub weeds, gorse soon regrows from dormant buds on stumps if shrubs are cut with chainsaws or slashers without prior herbicide treatment. Regrowth from buds can also occur after fires. The cheapest treatment for large infestations of gorse may be to fence it off and wait for it to revert to native bush. On less steep land, ploughing or repeated rotary slashing can be used.

### Herbicide control

#### Basal treatment of trunk

- The basal treatment X-Tree® can be applied with a low pressure sprayer using solid cone nozzle or a paintbrush. Liberally treat the full circumference and at the base of the shrub or tree trunks so the spray thoroughly wets at least 2-3 times around the diameter of the lower stem or trunk including the root collar area.

#### Cut stump treatment

- A hand slasher or scrub cutter can be used on isolated bushes but if the stump is not treated immediately with a herbicide, regrowth will occur. Large areas of slashed stumps can be left to grow to 0.5m in height and then sprayed.

#### Spray application

- Gorse can be killed using herbicides like glyphosate, metsulfuron or triclopyr/picloram mix or stump treated with picloram or glyphosate gel. Hard grazed gorse or recently slashed gorse is difficult to control because of reduced foliage to take up herbicide. Active growth is more susceptible to spraying.

## Summary of herbicides and application methods for control

Herbicide	Application
<b>Picloram gel</b>	Cut stump treatment.
<b>Glyphosate</b>	Spray application and cut stump treatment
<b>Glyphosate gel</b>	Cut stump treatment.
<b>Metsulfuron</b>	Spray application and cut stump treatment.
<b>Triclopyr/picloram mix</b>	Spray application and cut stump treatment.
<b>Triclopyr</b>	Spray application and cut stump treatment.
<b>X-Tree®</b>	Basal treatment of trunk.

Herbicide rules will apply. You may need to notify neighbours if spraying. The Waikato Regional Plan explains the agrichemical (herbicides) use rule in section 6.2



## More information

### Advice

For advice and additional information on control methods, call our pest plant staff on freephone 0800 800 401.

Chemical company representatives, farm supply stores, garden centres or the Weedbusters website can also be good sources for advice.

### Publications

The following publications are available from the Waikato Regional Council. Contact us to request a copy (freephone 0800 800 401).

- National Pest Plant Accord (manual of plants banned from sale, propagation and distribution) (free)
- Plant Me Instead! (Plants to use in place of pest plants) (free)

### Web

- *Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032* – [waikatoregion.govt.nz/RPMP](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/RPMP)
- *Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032* – [waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy)

