

Control and Management

As with most invasive species, the early detection and management is crucial in the control of St John's wort. Lightly infested areas should be prioritised before the infestation becomes established. Heavily infested areas will require treatment over a number of years.

Control becomes increasingly difficult as plants mature. Seedlings and small plants may be manually removed with care to ensure all the crown and rhizomes are removed.

The key steps to controlling St John's wort are:

- Learn to identify St John's wort, or seek assistance in identification
- Seek assistance to Plan control methods
- Implement the control methods as planned and monitor for regeneration.



Image: St John's Wort in fence line

Herbicide Options

Glyphosate 360 g/L with Metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (Various products)

Rate: 200 mL glyphosate plus 10 g metsulfuron-methyl per 100 L of water
Spot spray application.

Comments: Apply October to January.

Picloram 100 g/L + Triclopyr 300 g/L + Aminopyralid 8 g/L (Grazon Extra®)

Rate: 500 mL per 100L **Spot spray** application.

Comments: Apply October to January.

Whenever using herbicides ALWAYS CHECK THE LABEL for applicable withholding periods.

Acknowledgements

Much of this information was sourced from NSW Weedwise (<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds>)

yass valley council
the country the people



St John's Wort
Hypericum perforatum



Image: St John's Wort infested pasture

Why is St John's Wort a weed?

St John's wort is a long lived perennial weed that is extremely invasive of degraded pasture, roadside and bushland. Heavy infestations can reduce property values.

Plants strongly compete with both improved and native pasture species. Heavy infestations eliminate other plant species, form a thick monoculture and preventing seed germination.

In addition to adding to vegetable fault in wool St John's Wort contain a chemical called hypercin which affects the nervous system causing photosensitisation, weight loss, reduced pregnancies, still births and reduced milk production.

Chronic poisoning from St John's Wort can result in death.

What does it look like?

St John's wort is a herb weed with upright woody stems growing to 80 cm high. Stems can have a redish colour.

Leaves are dark olive green and paler on the underside with a prominent mid vein.

Flowers are bright yellow and up to 2 cm in diameter growing in clusters at the end of each stem.

Each flower has five petals with black dots on the margins and three bundles of fine needle like stamens growing from the centre

Once flowering has finished and the seeds begin to set, the plant rapidly turns brown and becomes more woody. The seed capsules are brown in colour, 5-7 mm long, hard and sticky.



Image: St John's Wort flower

How does it spread

St John's Wort spreads by seed as well as underground rhizome roots.

Each plant is a prolific seeder, producing up to 30,000 seeds per year. The sticky seed capsule readily adhere to animals, machinery and clothing. Seeds can travel short distances by wind and remain viable after passing through the digestive tract of animals.



Image: St John's Wort shooting from rhizomes

The roots of St John's Wort readily sucker from rhizomes. Root fragments also produce new plants making manual removal difficult

Cultivation of infestations spread rhizomes allowing new plants to grow when the root fragments come in contact with damp soil.