

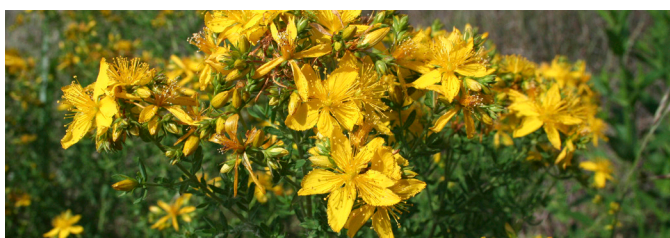
St John's wort

St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is an introduced garden plant, which is a priority weed in the Mid-Western Region. It is found in pastures, water catchment reserves, forests and national parks.

WHAT IS ST JOHN'S WORT?

St John's wort is an invasive plant which contains a chemical called hypericin. When ingested by livestock, the compound can become toxic.

Hypericin poisoning can cause skin damage, photosensitisation and in some cases, death. A single plant can produce up to 30,000 seeds per year.



ST JOHN'S WORT: AN INVASIVE WEED CONTAINING HYPERICIN

IDENTIFYING ST JOHN'S WORT

From November to January, St John's wort can be identified by its vibrant yellow flower, which is around 20mm in diameter. Each flower will have five petals and three stamens in the middle. St John's wort has a one metre root system and will grow to 60cm in height.

There are two types of St John's wort; narrow leaf strain and broad leaf strain. It is important to know the difference in strains as toxic properties vary between the two.

The narrow leaf is more widespread and contains more oil glands in the leaves, resulting in higher levels of hypericin. Broad leaf stems have fewer oil glands in the leaves, meaning lower levels of hypericin.

Leaves are the most reliable characteristic to tell the two types of St John's wort apart. The narrow leaf is 7-9mm wide, whereas the broad leaf is 10-12mm wide.



ST JOHN'S WORT COMPETES WITH PASTURE







ST JOHN'S WORT:
BROAD LEAF STRAIN



ST JOHN'S WORT:
NARROW LEAF STRAIN

Images: NSW DPI

MAJOR IMPACTS FOR FARMERS

-  Competes with pastures
-  Downgrades property value
-  Contaminates feed
-  Poisons livestock

CONTROLLING ST JOHN'S WORT

The most practical and cost effective method of control will vary, depending on the vastness of St John's wort present.



Identification

Learn how to identify and regularly check for St John's wort, particularly in October and November. If it is found, act immediately.



Spot spraying

This is a practical solution when isolated infestations have been identified. Spot spraying is most effective when in flower as it is easily seen and more susceptible to herbicides.



Biological control

There are currently six established varieties of biological control agents (beetles) in Australia. For more information, contact Council.

SPREAD

The main form of dispersal is by seed, which is very small and can be transported by water, soil, machinery, feed and fodder – particularly hay and chaff. The sticky seed capsules attach to wool and fur and the seed can also remain viable after passing through an animal.



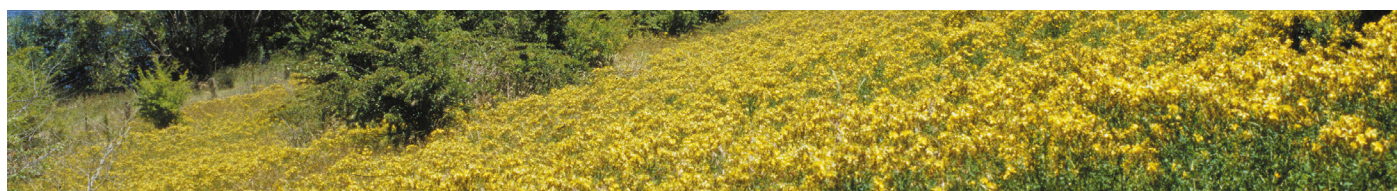
LAND OWNER RESPONSIBILITY

All land owners and occupiers have a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) under the Biosecurity Act 2015. This means they must, within reason, be proactive in knowing which weeds could be present in their surrounds and have a plan of management in place to reduce, minimise or eliminate the risk posed by weeds on properties.



COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY

When identified and reported, Council will inspect the infected area and offer a management plan with a repeat inspection arranged for a later date. To inspect weeds and offer technical advice, Council is responsible for ensuring the Biosecurity Act 2015, including fines for non-compliance of GBD.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit Council's website midwestern.nsw.gov.au, or the Department of Primary Industries website dpi.nsw.gov.au and search 'weeds'. Council's Weeds Team are available to assist on 6378 2939 or at weeds.admin@midwestern.nsw.gov.au.

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