

WEED IDENTIFICATION: MELONS

Identifying the difference between Camel Melon (*Citrullus lanatus*) and Prickly Paddy Melon (*Cucumis myriocarpus*) is highly important when making a chemical recommendation for a fallow spray.

Camel Melons are identified by their deeply lobed, variegated leaves (lighter colour around the leaf veins). The leaf stalk is shorter than leaf blade. The fruit formed is a smooth hairless spherical or oblong melon, 6-15 cm in length. They are mottled green with patches of white.



Prickly Paddy Melon



Camel Melon

Prickly Paddy Melon is also deeply lobed, but is pale green. The leaf stalk is equal to or longer than the leaf blade. The melon is spherical, between 20-25mm in diameter. They are covered in long soft bristles, and have parallel light and dark stripes running longitudinally. The fruit turns yellow at maturity.

Glyphosate alone will control seedling Camel Melon but not Prickly Paddy Melons. Garlon needs to be added for an effective kill.

For more information on Melons, or any other weed identification issues, contact your local Pursehouse Rural Agronomist.

WOODY WEED SOLUTIONS

It is estimated that weeds cost Australian Agriculture \$4 billion annually in lost production and cost of control. Weeds such as Blackberry, Common Bracken, Sweetbriar, St John's Wort, Eucalypt/Wattle regrowth and Boxthorns have a major influence on the health of livestock, the risk of fire, value of the property, livestock mustering problems, carrying capacity and to comply with government legislation.

While controlling woody weeds is difficult, it is not impossible with the use of such chemicals as Grazon DS, Access, Starane 200 and Tordon. A number of the harder to kill woody weeds require a three-year program to help producers gain long-term control over their weed problems while obtaining benefit from the money invested in herbicide. The best time to treat most of these woody weed problems is throughout the warmer months while weeds are actively growing. For any further information please contact your local Pursehouse Rural Agronomist.



Seeds Decay Faster in No-Til

Annual decay rate and dormancy (hard-seed) are critical factors influencing how long seed remains viable in the soil. These factors and knowledge seed-bank density can be used to determine how long a break is needed to deplete the weed seed-bank after a blow-out.

Researcher David Minkey, adviser on Integrated Weed Management, Western Australia said: "Seeds near the surface in no-till are subject to constant changes in light and temperature as well as moisture. As a result they generally age and decay faster than seeds buried under tillage systems."

There is significant data on some weeds of northern systems such as wild oats and sow-thistle; both of which persist longer if buried than if left on the soil surface.

For example: How long will weed seeds persist in the top 5cm of soil in the Darling Downs?

Weed	Seed remaining in soil seed-bank (%)			
	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
Barnyard Grass	20			
Black bindweed				6
Common Sowthistle (0-1cm)	12	<1	<1	
Common Sowthistle (5-10cm)	43	14	5	
Liverseed Grass	17			<1
Paradoxa Grass	14	2	<1	<1
Turnip Weed	56	28	15	7
Wild Oats	17	2	<1	<1

A key factor in seed-bank decay is predation by seed collecting or 'phediole' ants. Ants are widespread in Australian cropping systems and several species play a major role in removing weed seeds from the crop system. Data from Western Australia shows that ants can remove high percentages of annual ryegrass seed.

	+ Ants	- Ants
High Stubble	36.4	9.6
Low Stubble	61.0	12.0
LSD (0.05)	14.01	

Ants are more effective at foraging for weed seed in no-till systems and where stubble levels are not too high. As weed seed numbers increase so does the percentage of weed seed that the ants can remove.

The implication of this research are that for at least some key weed species, no-till systems have faster decay factors of weed seed banks. Limited amounts of tillage in a no-till system could have a negative impact - especially if weed seed were to be buried making them more prone to a longer dormant period and less available to predation by ants. For further information contact David Minkey (08) 9690 2081

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