

# African Boxthorn

## (*Lycium ferocissimum*)

FACTSHEET | February 2016



### What do the plants look like?

A much branched, perennial shrub, commonly 2-3 m tall. Branches are stiff, hairless and end in sturdy thorns. They also occur at right angles along the branches. Leaves are oval shaped, bright green and fleshy and occur in clusters along branchlets and at the base of thorns. Flowers are white to mauve with a tubular base mainly in spring and summer. They are usually five-lobed and about 12 mm in diameter. Fruit is smooth and round, 5-12 mm long, and orange-red in colour.



African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*)

### Why should boxthorn be controlled?

African Boxthorn was originally introduced to Australia from South Africa and planted for fencing and windbreaks. It spread from the initial plantings and by 1904 was proclaimed noxious in parts of Victoria.

Boxthorn produces large numbers of orange-red berries that contain more than twenty seeds each. These are eaten by birds and other animals then passed through their gut and deposited elsewhere.



African boxthorn fruit and flower



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Boxthorn invades native vegetation, alters habitat and overruns pastures. It forms dense, impenetrable thickets that reduce access for stock, native animals, people and vehicles. It provides shelter and food for pest animals such as foxes and rabbits. Its large thorns can also injure livestock and several pest insect species breed in its fruit.

## What are my responsibilities?

Boxthorns are declared under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004. Therefore all property owners have a legal responsibility to control boxthorns on their property.



*A large African Boxthorn*

## What are the best ways to control boxthorn?

Any plants found should be destroyed before setting seed to prevent infestation.

**Physical removal:** Seedlings can be hand pulled so long as the ground is soft. For extensive infestations in pastures, mechanical equipment such as a 'Boxthorn Plucker' can be used on individual plants. Bushes should be stacked and burnt following removal. Follow up control in subsequent years is essential to treat regrowth from root fragments left behind. Regrowth can be treated with herbicide.

**Chemical control:** The main herbicide treatments for boxthorn are listed below. Plants must be actively growing, i.e. green, when herbicide is applied (except for granular herbicide). A chemical dye marker can be added to the mixture to identify where you have sprayed.

**Foliage spray:** Foliar spraying is generally limited to small plants and regrowth to avoid off-target damage to native vegetation. When spraying all boxthorn foliage must be covered.

**Cut stump:** Stems are cut horizontally no higher than 15 cm from the ground and the cut surface painted immediately (within 10 seconds) with herbicide, using a hand held spray bottle or a brush.

**Granular herbicide application:** Suitable for controlling Boxthorn plants not amongst native vegetation. Apply 200g/kg Tebuthiuron granular herbicide (graslan product is

normally used) at a rate of 2gm per square metre distributed evenly within the drip zone of the target plant.

**Chemical formulation:** Best results are achieved using the following: In 100L of water, 1L Roundup and 5gm of Ally in 15L of water, 150 mls Roundup and 1 gm of Ally.

Always ensure that herbicides are used according to label directions

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