



Shire of Northam
Heritage, Commerce and Lifestyle

Cape Tulip Declared Pest & Toxic Weed

Spraying for Cape Tulip

Cape tulips are a persistent pest in the agricultural area of the Avon Wheatbelt. The two dominant varieties are the one leaf (*Moraea flaccida*) and two leaf (*M. miniate*) cape tulip. Most landowners are aware of the plant which commonly plagues pasture on agricultural and hobby farm properties. Cape tulip is a declared pest and it is the responsibility of landowners to control it on their property.

Did you know

This plant is toxic to grazing animals and contains a toxic chemical called glycoside which can affect the heart and potentially kill animals that graze on it. While cattle are commonly affected, sheep and other grazing animals will turn to the plant if there's inadequate alternative grazing options and they are hungry.

What to look for

Cape tulip germinates towards the end of winter at the beginning of spring. It's easily identifiable with its salmon coloured flowers and green fleshy strappy leaves. These plants are extremely hardy and while both varieties spread with the development of corms which are like bulbs under the surface of the ground, the one leaf variety also produces seed. These plants have the ability to remain dormant for between 5 and 10 years and during the growing season up to 60% can remain dormant therefore requiring a weed management program that extends over multiple years to succeed in eradicating the plant from your property. Corms can be easily introduced and spread through contaminated soil, via waterways and can be carried in the digestive tract by animals.



Treatment options

If you have small outbreaks, then manual removal by hand can be done. This option is best when the soil is still damp, and you can ensure total corm removal when digging the plant up. If you have more substantial coverage, then chemical application may be more suitable.

Chemical application is best done when the flower stem appears and the flowers start to open. This is when all the plant's energy is being utilised with flower production and chemical application will have the most impact. This can be done with handheld sprayers or if your goal is to protect the underlying pasture species with the use of a weed wiper which can be fitted to machinery and targets the cape tulip by chemical wiping the weed which sits higher than pasture species. While weed wipers can be quite pricey there are many homemade designs that can achieve the same outcome for substantially less in cost. There are lots of homemade design options online.



Where can landowners find more information?

If you are looking for answers on how to eliminate the weed, how to better maintain or look after your paddocks for your livestock, visit the Department of Agriculture and Food's Information Page for more information, or contact them on 9690 2217 directly to discuss your concerns.

Further information on local Pest weeds can and management techniques be found on our website as well as information on declared weeds. You can find this information at northam.wa.gov.au/develop-build/environmental-sustainability/toxic-weeds-in-the-shire-of-northam