

Watsonia

(*Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*)

Declared Plant requiring Management

Listed under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007

Why is it a problem?

Bulbil watsonia is an aggressive weed of native vegetation. It can form dense stands that exclude other ground-layer species in more open bush, wetlands and along creek lines. It also invades roadsides, wasteland and unimproved pasture, especially in winter waterlogged areas. It is regarded as visual pollution on roadsides because of its size and non-native appearance. It is suspected to be poisonous to stock, with stock generally avoiding mature plants, although they appear to be unaffected by young shoots.

What does it look like?

Flowers

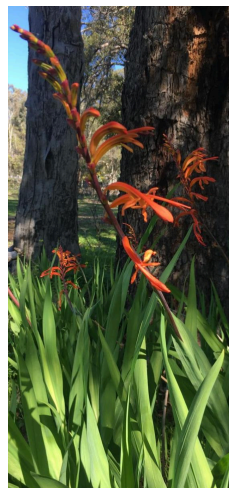
The flowers spikes bear two rows of curved, tubular flowers (10-15 on each spike) that are orange, red, pink and purple in colour, and have six partially fused 'petals' 5 to 8 cm long. Flowers appear in spring and early summer.

Stems

The flowering stems up to 2 m tall appear in spring and are rounded, up to 20 mm thick and are often reddish in colour. Stems arise from the base of the plant along with the majority of the leaves.

Leaves

Watsonia produces dense stands of light green, sword-shaped leaves from the base. The rigid leaves have a prominent mid-vein and are less than 110cm long and 1 to 5 cm wide. They are produced from a central corm in winter and die off in late summer – autumn, or earlier in dry years.



How do we control it?

Contaminated soil and plant material should be disposed of safely to avoid creating new infestations. Cormils and corms must be burnt or buried to a depth greater than 20cm, as they will re shoot if left on the soil surface.

Remove by hand

For small infestations, individual plants can be dug out by hand or by loosening the soil with a fork and pulling the top growth. Disposal in the general waste bin and not in green waste bin is recommended.

Cultivation

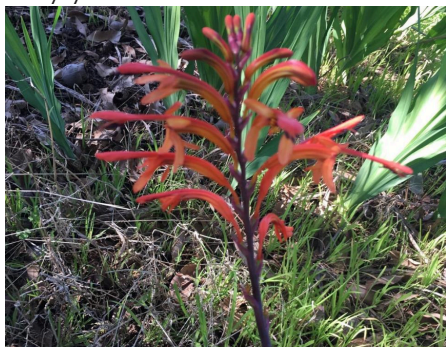
Cultivation to 10 cm provides good control if done after the old corm is exhausted and before the new corms form or before the flower stem emerges.

Grazing

Stock will graze on young shoots and can provide effective control in pastures.

Herbicide

Small infestations in native vegetation can be controlled by spot spraying or wiping foliage with herbicide, although this can be labour intensive.



Where can landowners find more information?

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For more information please visit the Department of Agriculture and Food's Website: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/weeds> or contact them direct on 1300 374 731.

Additionally, you can find more information on the Shire of Northam's website: www.northam.wa.gov.au or contact the Environmental Sustainability Officer on 9622 6100.