

Spanish Heath

Series: Environmental Weed Factsheet
Ranked 13 — Worst weed in Yarra Ranges



Common Name: Spanish Heath

Botanical Name: *Erica lusitanica*

Origin: South –western Europe

Size: 1m– 2m H, 0.5m–1.5m W

Flowers: June—September

Seeds: October—January

Best removal time: March—August

How to dispose of weeds:

Recovery & Transfer centres:

- Healesville
- Wesburn
- Coldstream
- Lysterfield

Note: For a free tip voucher to dispose weeds, contact the Environment Dept. on 1300 368 333. Limited availability.

OR

Fortnightly Garden Organics Bin

Service. *Note: This service is only available to properties within eligible service areas. For more information, contact the Waste Management services on 1300 368 333.*

OR

Bundled green waste service.

Note: Check your Residential Recycling & Waste guide for details of the next service in your area.

What it does...

This weed invades areas of mid and ground storey, smothering and displacing indigenous groundcovers, herbs, grasses and orchids. It is very flammable.

What it looks like...

Spanish Heath is an evergreen, slender erect woody shrub. It is often mistaken for the native Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*), which is to the right of the Spanish Heath in the photo (left).

The flowers are in pendulous clusters of 2-4 on the ends of very short side branchlets. Flowers vary from white to pinkish. Dead flowers persist on the plant before seeding in spring to early summer.

How it spreads...

Each plant can produce 9 million seeds annually. They spread via:

- wind.
- water.
- animals.
- contaminated soil.
- spreading root systems.
- dumping of garden plants
- Sold at some nurseries, markets and fetes. Buyer beware!

How to remove it...



HAND: Small plants can be hand pulled and larger plants can be dug out with a mattock or garden fork. Plants break off easily and remaining roots will reshoot. This should be done prior to spring, before the plant seeds.



CUT & PAINT: Larger plants can be cut off at the base and then the stump painted immediately with an undiluted glyphosate-based product.



SPRAY: For large infestations where native vegetation is sparse, brush cut the spanish heath and spot spray re-growth with a glyphosate-based product. This is best done in early autumn before flowering. Speak to your supplier for information on relevant herbicides and quantities.

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Indigenous alternatives to plant...

Many shrub alternatives exist that are indigenous to the Yarra Ranges region and would make great substitutes for the Spanish Heath.

Some alternatives include:



Photos: weed; Marilyn Gray, Kelly Hofert, David Blair

Useful websites

The following is a list of useful information resources:

- For a list of indigenous plant nurseries, see [Indigenous Plant Nurseries list](#).
- For a list of other weeds in Yarra Ranges, see [Environmental Weeds list](#).
- For a list of chemical/herbicide contractors, see [Contractor and supplier list](#).
- For descriptions of the local plants and the weeds of the Shire of Yarra Ranges see www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/plants



WARNING IF USING CHEMICALS

If you are weeding, all chemical use must be done as per manufacturers' guidelines. Ensure that you wear protective clothing/eye wear at all times. Take care and protect yourself, your family, pets and the natural environment (waterways, indigenous plants, wildlife) from coming into contact with chemicals.

When purchasing your herbicide always ask for a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Product suppliers are required to make these sheets available at the point of sale. If a sheet is not available, notify the product manufacturer and the state authority. For further information go to www.apvma.gov.au or call the Poisons Information Service on 13 11 26.

For information on State-listed noxious weeds contact the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) on 136 186. Remember, as a landowner you are required by State law to control and remove noxious weeds on your land.

Produced by the Environment Department of Yarra Ranges Council.
Working with communities to wipe out weeds for a better future.

