

# Hawthorn *Azarola (Crataegus sinaica) and May (Crataegus monogyna)*



*Hawthorn in flower*

Photo credit: Katrina Warner

**Hawthorn is the collective common name used for Azarola and May. These plants are physically similar and the management advice is the same for both.**

**Hawthorn is present in isolated infestations in the Mount Lofty Ranges but has the potential to become more widespread.**

**Hawthorn (Azarola and May) is a declared weed under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019.**

## Description

Hawthorn is an erect, branching shrub or small tree which can grow to 7 m high and 7 m wide.

The branches are stout and armed with thorns up to 25mm long. The leaves are lobed and 1 to 6cm wide.

Flowers are white, cream or pink and grow in flat-topped clusters at the ends of branches.

The fruit is red, globular and contains two or three seeds. Seeds germinate in autumn.

Early growth is slow and plants do not flower until the second or third year. Flowering occurs in late spring to early summer, and leaves are shed in autumn.

Plants are long-lived, possibly for more than 70 years.

Hawthorn reproduces by seeds and suckers. A mature tree produces over 2000 fruits, each with 1 to 3 seeds.

Seeds have a dormancy of 2 or more years.

## Impacts

Hawthorn impacts on bushland and watercourses by invading the shrub layer of grassy woodlands. It forms dense, spiny thickets that displace other shrubs and suppresses the growth of ground-layer plants.

It provides poor habitat for native fauna and reduces biodiversity.

Leaves dropped in autumn may increase nutrient levels in the soil and make it easier for other pest plants to become established.

Hawthorn can provide good cover for rabbits and other pests.

The plant is closely related to horticultural crops belonging to the rose family. Overseas, Hawthorn species host the fire blight bacterium which affects pears and apples. Hawthorn is also known to host Mediterranean fruit fly and light brown apple moth.





Hawthorn flowers

Photo credit: Katrina Warner

## Distribution

Hawthorn was introduced to Australia as an ornamental plant and to form hedges.

It occurs mainly where annual rainfall exceeds 600 mm and invades watercourses in lower rainfall areas. It is a pest plant of roadsides, wasteland, poorly managed pastures and abandoned orchards. It invades grassy woodlands and watercourses.

Seeds are dispersed by farm machinery, vehicles, animals and agricultural produce. In the past deliberate plantings have been the main cause of spread but now spread by birds is more important.

## Management and control

Effective low-disturbance chemical treatments such as filling or using the basal bark method will leave the dead tree standing. This ensures that no soil disturbance is needed and some habitat is left behind.

A more invasive treatment involves felling trees by cutting the trunks as close to the ground as possible then immediately treating the stump with herbicide.

Herbicides with the active ingredient Triclopyr are effective. Please follow the label directions and if using herbicides close to water, a safer option will be to use a glyphosate herbicide that contains an aquatic safe surfactant/wetter.

Mature shrubs can be removed mechanically, but regrowth occurs unless all the crown and the top few centimetres of the main roots are removed.

Small plants are susceptible to spot spraying. Seedlings can be hand-pulled.

For advice on chemical control techniques contact Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu.

Please refer to the Weed Control Handbook for declared plants in South Australia for advice on chemical control. You can find it at [www.pir.sa.gov.au](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au)

## Declarations

The following sections of the *Landscape SA Act* apply to Hawthorn in the Hills and Fleurieu region:

S186(2) Can't transport on a public road

S188(1) Can't sell plants or plant material

S188(2) Can't sell contaminated product, material or equipment

S192(2) Must control all plants

S194 Regional landscape boards can recover costs for control in a road reserve from adjoining landholders

## Further information

Further information is available through Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu

**Mount Barker Office:** Cnr Mann & Walker streets, Mount Barker, 5251 (08) 8391 7500

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