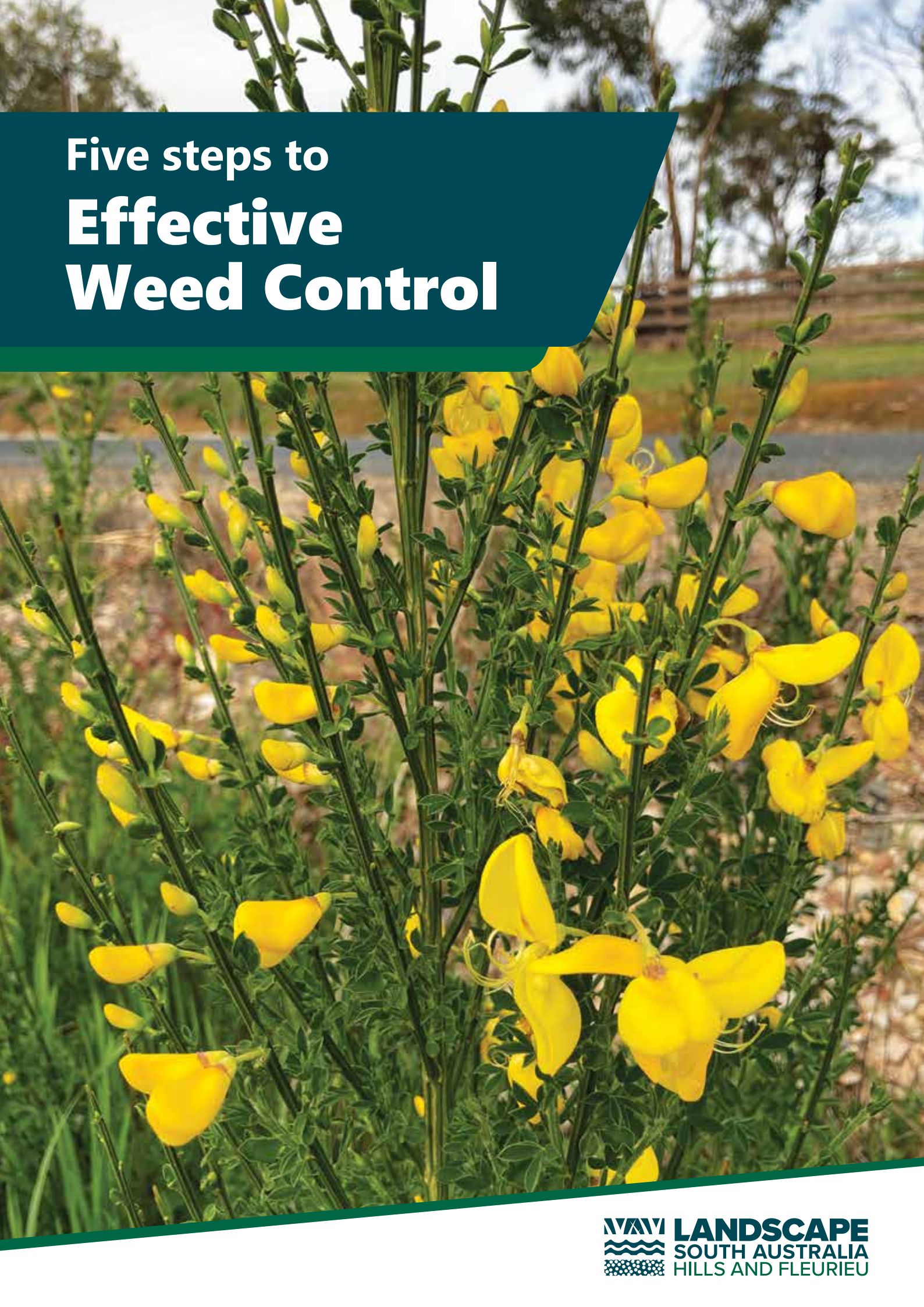

Five steps to Effective Weed Control

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA HILLS AND FLEURIEU

Acknowledgement of Country

The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board acknowledges First Nations as the first people of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect the Peramangk, Kaurna, and Ngarrindjeri peoples, past and present, who have cared for Yerta/Ruwe for generations, nurturing its life, stories, and landscapes. We recognise their deep knowledge, spiritual belonging, and enduring connection to Country.

We are committed to walking alongside First Nations, listening, learning, and working together to protect and restore these lands and waters.

Welcome

You're here because;

- You're ready to tackle the weed threat on your property
- You want to learn how to tell the difference between plants—and how to control them
- You want a clear plan to guide your weed control efforts
- You're prepared to invest your time and money—now and into the future

You're not alone – weeds are everyone's problem. If you manage or own land in our region, chances are you're dealing with weedy challenges—woody weeds, exotic trees, or stubborn bulb species.

This guide focuses on weed control in agricultural and environmental settings—though it's worth noting that some of our worst weeds actually started in home gardens!

Weeds pose a serious threat to healthy properties, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity. Since colonisation, many introduced species in Australia have become aggressive invaders, degrading ecosystems and taking over farmland.

This guide will walk you through five simple steps to help manage weeds more effectively with maximum efficiency. You can download the Effective Weed Control Action template from our website to map out where and when to act. The plan links directly to sections in this guide.

About this guide

This guide is part of a series designed to support smart, well-timed land management actions for key areas on your property and programs:

- **Soil**
- **Native vegetation**
- **Watercourses**
- **Weed control**
- **Revegetation**

Using one or more of these guides will help you make informed decisions, care for natural resources, and boost your efficiency as a land manager. Choose the guides that suit your needs—or use all five to create a complete stewardship plan for your property.

The content draws on the knowledge and experience of our stewardship team, local landholders, and partners working across the Hills and Fleurieu region.

We wish you every success.

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Front cover: broom on roadside. This page Cape broom invading bushland.

STEP 1

Plan to succeed

A plan will help you understand how much time, money, and effort you'll need for a successful weed control program. You can use our **Effective Weed Management Plan template**, which you can download from our website.

Manage your expectations

Having a written plan helps you set realistic expectations and keeps you on track. Consider:

- **Time and money:** How much time and money can you commit each year to controlling weeds?
- **Follow-up work:** How much time will you need to spend each year dealing with regrowth, missed weeds, seedlings, and new weeds that pop up after your initial control work?
- **Professional help:** Do you want to hire a professional for more difficult jobs or tough-to-control weeds?
- **Neighbours:** Is it possible to work with your neighbours on shared weed issues, or to split the cost of a contractor?
- **Replacing the weeds:** After removing weeds, something will need to grow back. If you leave bare ground, it's likely to get overtaken by other weeds, so plan what will replace them.
- **Herbicide concerns:** If you or your neighbours are worried about using herbicides, how will you manage those concerns?

What are you trying to achieve?

Understanding why you are controlling weeds is essential. There are many reasons, such as:

- Protecting biodiversity and supporting native plants
- Stopping weeds from choking up a creek
- Preventing weeds from invading crops or grazing land
- Keeping important areas like fire tracks clear and accessible
- Legal requirements (for declared weeds that you must control by law)

Gazania *(Gazania sp)* is a 'declared' plant under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*

What do we mean by 'weeds'

It's important to understand the different types of weeds you're dealing with because each type may need a different control method. Here are some common categories:

Declared plants are significant weed threats to our State's primary production industries, natural environments and public safety. Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*, weeds are placed in category 1 to 3. Category 1 weeds are considered the most significant weeds in the state and therefore attract the highest penalties. Landholders have a responsibility under the Act to control or eradicate weeds declared under s192(1) or (2).

Weed of National Significance (WoNS) are some of the most problematic plant species in Australia. There are great best practice manuals available for most WoNS. All WoNS have a declaration status in South Australia.

Agricultural weeds are weeds that impact on agricultural activities. These weeds can interfere with stock movement, cause stock health issues, reduce pasture and crop productivity, and contaminate produce such as fibre or grain. The presence of these plants in some produce sold overseas can have real market access implications.

Environmental weeds are plants that impact on natural values. These weeds can interfere with the movement of native species, out-complete, shade or overwhelm native plants, and impact on the enjoyment of natural environments by people. Some weeds are known to change the ecological landscape, impacting on a broad range of plants, animals and insects. Some Australian native plants can become invasive environmental weeds in our region. Examples include sweet pittosporum, Sydney golden-wattle and Western Australian bluebell creeper.

Fire promoting weeds are weeds that either assist with the movement of fire through fine leaf and twig material, or can intensify a fire by containing plant oils or through the accumulation of dry material. There are wide ranging views about the impacts of weeds during a fire and more research is needed to identify the impact of weeds on fires.

Woody weeds are weeds that grow over many years and form woody stems, these include rambling vines like blackberry, shrubs like gorse and small trees like olives.

Bulb weeds form a tuber or bulb. They resprout annually and new bulbs form over time. Many of these plants also develop seeds that aid in weed spread.

Grass weeds can be annual or perennial. Many problematic grass weeds form tussocks that out-compete other plants.

Annual weeds are plants that germinate, grow and form seed in one year. Problematic annuals often restrict other plants from germinating and will often produce significant amounts of seed.

English broom *(Cytisus scoparius)* is a Weed of National Significance

Sydney golden wattle *(Acacia longifolia)* is an environmental weed in the hills and Fleurieu region

Don't let weeds drag you down!

Track your progress

Tracking your progress is important to see how much your weed control efforts are working. **Photopoints** are a simple way to monitor changes. Set up these photopoints before you start work and take photos regularly from the same spot. This will help you track changes over time. Videos are also a good tool to show progress. These visual reminders will help you see how far you've come and where more work may be needed.

General principles of weed management

Weed control can be broken down into **prevention, eradication, containment,** and **asset protection**. Understanding these concepts helps you decide which action to take for each weed problem.
For example:

- **Prevention:** Stopping new weeds from getting onto your property.
- **Eradication:** Getting rid of newly established weeds as soon as you can.
- **Containment:** Stopping the spread of weeds and reducing large infestations.
- **Asset protection:** Protecting important areas like crops, grazing land, or native habitats from weed damage.

But remember, no matter which technique you use, **follow-up work** is always needed. Even after you remove weeds, some may still grow back, and seeds in the soil may sprout. Plan for **regular follow-up checks** to keep your land weed-free over time.

Plan to replace weeds

When you remove weeds, you might end up with bare ground. It's important to plant something in that space to prevent other weeds from taking over. For example, you could plant grass or native plants that will outcompete the weeds.

Consider potential impacts

Before you remove weeds, think about any possible impacts. Sometimes, weeds provide important functions, like holding the soil together or offering shelter for native animals. Removing them too quickly could harm the environment. In such cases, a **staged approach** to weed control - removing weeds slowly and carefully - may be the best way to minimize negative impacts.

Keep your plan flexible

As you go, you'll likely find that some weeds require more work than expected. Be flexible in your approach, and remember that weed management is an ongoing process that might take several years. By sticking to your plan and regularly updating it, you'll be able to see progress and keep things on track.

Having a well-thought-out plan will guide you through each step of the weed management process, keeping you organised and on top of your goals.

Capeweed, a common agricultural weed

Put something back. Revegetating areas previously dominated by weeds will help prevent takeover by new weeds

Photopoints are a simple way to monitor weed control progress and recovery of the site following control actions.

STEP 2

Identify and map your weeds

Is that a weed?

Having some basic plant identification skills and information about your weeds will guide you on appropriate management techniques, timing of techniques, and which weeds to focus on in the landscape and where. Whilst this might seem a bit daunting, you will soon discover that there are some major serial offenders, and you may only need to learn a handful of different weeds.

There are many great resources available to help you identify plants in general and for weeds specifically. Using the camera function on your phone's web browser (Google Lens) is a great place to start.

Other online resources include:

- Weedscan
- Atlas of Living Australia
- iNaturalist
- Pl@ntNet
- Google Lens
- Facebook groups – such as SA Natureteers

Blackberry *(Rubus spp)*

Common weeds

Watsonia *(Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera)*

Wild olive *(Olea europa)*

Sweet briar *(Rosa rubiginosa)*

Periwinkle *(Vinca major)*

Boneseed *(Chysanthemoides monilifera)*

Gorse *(Ulex europaeus)*

Artichoke thistle *(Cynara cardunculus)*

Arum lily *(Zantedeschia aethiopica)*

Other places where you can identify your plants:

- Contact a Stewardship Officer from Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu. Plants can often be identified from a photo.
- Contact a local community group that works on land management such as Landcare or Friends of Parks groups.
- Have your plant identified at the State Herbarium by a trained botanist.

Weed look-a-likes

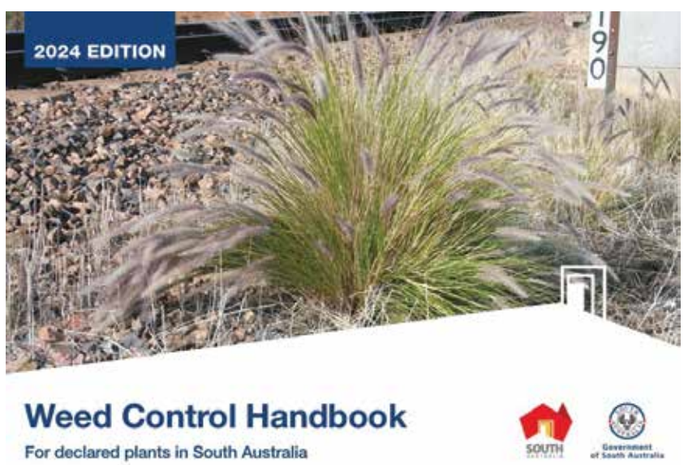
There are many native plants and weeds that look similar. Make sure you are confident about your weed identification. **See pages 26-28 for some commonly misidentified weeds of our region and their native lookalikes**.

Once you know which weeds you have, there are some excellent resources which will tell you the best methods of control for that weed species.

- A basic web search such as, arum lily control methods South Australia, will often yield very helpful results.

The **PIRSA Weed Control Handbook** – your new best friend

Plants that are declared weeds can be found in the Weed Control Handbook, written by PIRSA, this handbook is one of the most important tools in your weed control effort. It includes a picture of the plant, the best control methods as well as the correct season for control. The Weed Control Handbook can be easily accessed online.



Map your weeds

In this phase of plan development, you need to map your weeds - understanding what weeds are around at different times of the year and in different locations.

Maps are a particularly useful tool for supporting your weed management and will bring full visibility to the weed control challenge you face.

First things to mark on your map are the location of your landscape 'assets'. These will help to guide the selection of suitable weed control techniques and prioritise where to start.

Assets include:

- Creeklines
- Dams, wetlands, swamps
- Native vegetation
- Rocky outcrops
- Revegetation and stock shelter areas - including shelter belts, wind breaks
- Fence lines, crop and livestock paddocks (current and future)
- Vehicle tracks and walkways - these are important areas to monitor due to high levels of disturbance which is where weeds are often introduced

Create **management zones** using these assets and areas as descriptors. Identifying management zones, and identifying the weeds within them, will help you to decide which weeds and areas are the highest priority to work on and will help you target the weeds within the zone using the appropriate techniques.

As you are mapping the weeds within each zone, take note of the following and mark them on your map.

- Are the weeds in dense patches or scattered?
- Are there scattered outliers and where are they?
- Is there a main infestation, where is it?
- How large is the weedy area?
- Location of weeds in the context of your property – are they amongst pasture, native vegetation, other weeds, gully, or a hill, or a creekline?
- What weed species are you are dealing with?

The more detail you have the easier it can be to plan your next steps.


Map your weeds - African feathergrass


Blackberry is a common weed in watercourses


Cape broom germinated by bushfire


Paddock gorse

STEP 3

Working out where to start

Not sure where to start? Choose the most suitable weed control strategy for the issue at hand

Start by thinking about these three key goals:

- **Eradication** – get rid of new weeds before they spread
- **Containment** – stop established weeds from spreading
- **Asset protection** – protect your most valuable areas (like creeks, bushland, crops)

What you do depends on:

- Size and age of the weed infestation
- Type of weed
- How close it is to valuable areas
- How easy the site is to access
- Your time, budget, and tools

Individual plants like pines in bushland are easier to eradicate than dense infestations

1. Eradication: Deal with new weeds quickly

New or small infestations are easiest and cheapest to fix. If you spot a few broom or gorse plants, remove them right away before they drop seed. The longer you leave them, the harder and more expensive they are to control.

2. Containment: Work from the outside in

If weeds are already spreading:

- Start with the **least weedy** areas first
- Focus on **outliers** (weeds away from the main patch)
- Then push back the **main infestation**

This prevents weeds from getting worse in the clean areas and helps shrink the infestation over time.

3. Asset protection: Focus on what matters most

When weeds are widespread, focus on high-value areas first:

- Native vegetation
- Grazing land
- Property boundaries (especially fences)
- Creeks or waterways

Controlling weeds near fences also helps protect infrastructure and can improve your relationship with neighbours.

Set priorities

You probably can't tackle all your weeds at once. Think about:

- Seasons – control bulb weeds in spring, woody weeds in summer
- Your schedule and budget
- Best times to control each species based on the life cycle of the plant

Start with small weed patches and outliers, then move into heavier infestations when you can.

DIY or contractor?

Your planning should consider the time you have to control an infestation and your budget.

Depending on the size of the infestation you are dealing with, your capacity and your abilities, you may want to consider working with a contractor. Weed control contractors can do the initial hard control, helping break the back of a big or difficult to access infestation. There are several weed control contractors who can even spray from drones! Some contractors are also willing to provide guidance, helping to build your skills sets and abilities to identify and control weeds. Contractors are very experienced at giving you a strong indication about the time and cost involved to get an infestation under control, they are also very good at working within your budget.

Gorse infestation

1. Weed front of erica following cut and swab of large plants

Dealing with large infestations

Work on the weed front - the part that's spreading into new areas. Imagine drawing a line just inside the edge of the patch:

- For small weeds like watsonia, your control zone might be 1–2m wide
- For bigger weeds like gorse, it could be 5m

Each season, advance your weed front line and follow up last year's work.

Why this works:

1. Stops weeds spreading
2. Makes the problem smaller over time
3. Helps you stay focused on a clear area
4. Keeps you motivated as you see progress

Dense infestation of olive seedlings close to creekline

2. Regeneration of native species following erica control in bushland

Controlling weeds in watercourses

Do you need a permit or approval for weed control?

Controlling weeds in a watercourse and its floodplain has potential to cause damage to the watercourse. Disturbance to bed and banks of a watercourse can cause erosion, both through the action of the heavy machinery disturbing soil, and removing the weedy vegetation cover, exposing bare soil to flowing water.

Before deploying heavy machinery to a watercourse, clearing large trees or slashing large woody weed infestations, speak to one of our Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu stewardship officers to discuss your plans so we can provide tailored advice. In some cases, a water affecting activity permit from the board may be required before works commence in accordance with *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. Controlling woody weeds and trees from dam walls should not involve root removal as this is likely to compromise the dam wall's integrity. Please refer to information on dam safety on our website for managing plants in dam infrastructure.

Work with gravity – always start at the top

Seeds and fruits can spread by wind, water, animals, flowing streams, and gravity. When working on a slope, hillside or creekline, always start your weed control at the highest point and work your way down.

Imagine starting at the bottom of a hill: you might clear weeds one year, but when you come back the next, the area could be reinfested from seeds washing down from above - frustrating and disheartening!

By working from uphill to downhill or upstream to downstream, you'll stop the spread before it starts and make much better progress over time.

Woody weeds as habitat

Woody weeds don't just take over - they can also provide shelter for pest animals like rabbits, feral cats, and foxes. Removing dense weed areas can help discourage these pests and make your land safer by reducing the risk of uneven ground, warrens, and tripping hazards.

At the same time, remember that some native animals - like bandicoots and woodland birds — may also use woody weeds as temporary habitat. This doesn't mean you should leave the weeds, but it does mean you should plan carefully. Always think about what plants you'll replace them with to support the local wildlife.

Replacement by other weeds

You've worked hard to clear a big weed infestation — but after a good rain, you might see other weeds popping up like thistles, pasture weeds, or three-cornered garlic. It can feel like you're back at square one!

But actually, reaching this stage is a sign you're making real progress!

Now's the time to act by planting desirable species. Whether it's native revegetation or improving your pasture, filling the gaps quickly will help prevent new weed problems. Use our **Five Steps to Thriving Revegetation** guide to give your project the best chance of success.

Dealing with erosion

Bare soil isn't just unsightly - it's a big invitation for erosion and weed colonisation.

Keep these points in mind:

1. Bare soil can easily erode and lead to new weed outbreaks.
2. Sometimes, even low-level groundcover is better than nothing at all.
3. Be ready to revegetate quickly with pasture, grasses, or native species to stabilise the soil and block weeds from getting a foothold.

Soil testing – know what you're working with

Sometimes weeds thrive because of the soil itself. Especially in **grazing areas**, soil type and condition can have a big impact on which plants will grow.

Getting your soil tested for nutrient levels and acidity is a smart move.

The results can help you correct soil health to better support pasture or native species - and make it much harder for weeds to come back strong.

Controlling weeds on roadsides

Managing declared weeds on roadsides is the responsibility of *Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu*. We focus on getting the best results for the community by targeting priority weeds - but with over 10,000 km of roads and about 150 declared weed species, we can't tackle everything.

If you spot declared weeds on a roadside that aren't currently a priority but are important to you, you can apply for a Section 221 permit through your local council. This lets you undertake weed control on that roadside yourself.

Remember: roadsides can be dangerous places to work, so always make sure you (or any contractor you use) have proper safety processes in place.

Working with neighbours and community groups

You don't have to do it alone!

Working alongside neighbours or local groups is a great way to build knowledge, share resources, and strengthen your community connections. Locals often have valuable experience and can offer practical tips that save you time and effort.

Blackberry along a watercourse a few weeks after spray treatment

Landholders can control roadside weeds after obtaining a permit from their local council - African lovegrass

Working together to control large olive trees invading bushland

STEP 4

Weed control smarts - which methods will you use to get rid of your weeds?

There's usually more than one way to kill a weed – slashing, spraying, hand pulling.

The method you choose should:

1. Effectively kill the weed
2. Avoid damaging nearby plants
3. Suit your skills and budget and not burn you out!

Different spots, different strategies

Not all areas are the same—each location brings its own challenges and risks. Choosing the right technique depends on the site.

- Is it wet or dry?
- Flat or steep?
- Are you working in a gully, on a hilltop, or a rocky patch?
- Is it a paddock, and if so, is it used for crops or grazing? (Some herbicides need a wait time before replanting or grazing.)
- Is it a sensitive area like native bush, rocky outcrops, or near water?

Integrated weed management (IWM)

Often, using a mix of methods works best - this is called Integrated Weed Management. Timing matters too - spring and autumn are great for controlling weeds while they're actively growing. Try this:

1. Slash the weed
2. Let it regrow for 3-6 months
3. Spray the fresh growth
4. Hand-pull any new seedlings.

This approach cuts down herbicide use and boosts results.

Step 1 - Integrated weed management - slash the large bio-mass

Step 2 - Integrated weed management - spraying seedlings and regrowth after slashing 3-6 months after slashing

Tip: Even if the same weed appears in multiple spots, your approach may need to change. Gorse in a paddock needs different treatment to gorse in a creek.

Below are some of the weeds control methods you may wish to put in your plan.

Biological control (Biocontrol)

Biocontrol means introducing natural enemies (like insects) from the weed's home country. These are tested carefully to make sure they only affect the target weed.

But keep in mind:

Biocontrol won't wipe out weeds completely
You'll still need other methods to fully control infestations. After fire or floods, weeds may come back strong, but biocontrol agents usually return over time.

Manual weed control

Hand-pulling weeds or using tools like tree poppers can be cheap and effective, especially in small areas.

Hoeing is great for cutting weeds down at the base or dealing with weed seedlings.

Solarisation: Cover tilled soil with clear or black plastic in hot weather. This "cooks" weeds and seeds in the top layer of soil.

Mechanical weed control

Slashing - Slashing is great for knocking down grasses and soft weeds. It can be done with a brush cutter, whipper snipper, or tractor - ideal for paddocks, roadsides, parks, and bushland.

When slashing in native bush, protect important plants by marking them with stakes so they're not accidentally cut.

Deadheading - If you're short on time, slashing flowers before they set seed is an effective way to reduce future weed growth. Do this after flowering but before seeds mature.

Mulching / grooming - Heavy-duty mulching equipment (like excavators with mulcher heads) can be used to break down woody weeds like gorse. This leaves behind a thick mulch layer that can suppress regrowth or be burned to trigger germination for later spraying. It's a smart way to divide large infestations into smaller, more manageable patches. While it can be costly upfront, it saves time and herbicide in the long run.

Biocontrol - Gorse spider mite

Manual weed control is a good option for small infestations and sensitive areas

Slashing false bamboo in creekline

Mulching boxthorn

All about herbicides

Chemical herbicides are one of the most effective weed control tools, but they must be used safely and correctly.

Before you spray:

- Always read the label
- Check the weather - don't spray before rain or on windy days
- Avoid watercourses and sensitive plants
- Be mindful of crops, grazing animals, and market restrictions.

Get certified

A short chemical user course through a registered training organisation is highly recommended to understand safe handling and application.

Safety first (PPE)

Wear chemical-resistant gloves, long sleeves, long pants, and eye protection. Some herbicides may also require masks or respirators.

Spray drift

Spray drift can harm nearby crops (especially vines and fruit trees), contaminate produce, and even impact organic certification. Check for withholding periods if livestock are grazing or crops are for consumption.

Herbicides action

Non-selective - Kills most plants it touches, e.g. like glyphosate. Okay for smaller individual plants, but not effective on large woody weeds without targeted application.

Selective - Targets specific weed types. For example, MCPA and Dicamba kill broadleaf weeds but not grasses.

Contact herbicides - Kill only the parts they touch. Pine oil is an example - works well on young plants but may not stop regrowth.

Residual and pre-emergent - Stays in the soil and stops new weeds from sprouting - sometimes for up to two years. Use with care, as these can damage other plants if misapplied or if they move through the soil.

Penetrants, surfactants and wetting agents - Help herbicides stick, spread, and absorb - especially useful for tough, waxy, or hairy leaves.

A good knapsack sprayer is an excellent investment for foliar spraying weeds up to chest height

Herbicide use techniques

Foliar spraying
This is the most common method of applying herbicide, used across farms, bushland, gardens, and roadsides.

Knapsack or handheld spray bottles – best for small, precise jobs. Low pressure means less risk to nearby plants and easier access to tricky areas.

Long-line spraying – below pressure, covers more ground. Good for dense infestations like blackberry. Boom spraying – Used in agriculture or by councils, with a large spray boom mounted on a vehicle. Best for broad-scale areas like paddocks or roadsides.

Drill & fill
Great for large woody weeds (e.g. olives, willows, hawthorn). Drill holes around the base of the trunk, inject herbicide immediately, and let it work over weeks/months. If the plant reshoots, repeat. Dead trees can be left to break down or removed once fully dead. See image below.

Frilling
Similar to drill & fill but uses a tomahawk or chainsaw to notch the bark, then applies herbicide directly to the exposed tissue. Quick and effective for larger stems. See image on pg 20.

Pad injection
Used for cactus weeds like prickly pear. Drill one hole for every fourth pad and inject herbicide straight in. Be careful - untreated pads can fall, root, and regrow.

Cut & swab
For small woody weeds. Cut low with secateurs or loppers, then immediately swab the stump with herbicide. Use dabber bottles or squeeze bottles for quick, easy application. Less soil disturbance than pulling.

Leaf wiping
Perfect for bulb weeds (e.g. watsonia, Cape tulip) in bush settings where spraying risks harming nearby plants. Use 'tongs of death' - kitchen tongs with sponges to wipe herbicide directly onto leaves.

Basal bark treatment
Best for thin-barked trees up to 10cm diameter e.g. olives. Mix herbicide with bio-oil or diesel and apply to trunk from ground level up to 30cm. If multi-stemmed, treat every stem. The oil helps herbicide soak through the bark and into the plant's circulatory system.

Drill and fill technique used on willow tree

Leaf wiping watsonia with 'tongs of death'

Frilling technique using chainsaw and herbicide on a large willow

Using fire to control weeds

Controlled burning
Burning vegetation can trigger mass germination of weed seeds, reducing the seed bank and making follow-up control easier. Great for fire-responsive weeds like gorse and broom. Post-fire regrowth offers a good window for targeted herbicide use or physical removal (e.g. grubbing, tree poppers).

After slashing
Follow-up burning after slashing can help clean up leftover material and stimulate seed germination for future control.

Fire can support natural regeneration of native vegetation if used correctly. Check fire bans, get permits if required and always follow your local council and CFS advice.

Preventing weed spread

Stopping weeds before they spread saves time and money. Here's how:

- Clean machinery between paddocks and properties
- Use certified weed-free seed and hay
- Install windbreaks to catch airborne seeds
- Improve pastures or replant native species to outcompete weeds.

Burning gorse or broom germinates dormant seed in the soil. Follow-up spraying the fire-germinated seedlings before they flower and set seed brings effective long-term control to these sites.

Case study: Tackling weeds on a property

On the map, we've marked out:

- Fencelines, grazing paddocks, native bushland, and vehicle tracks.
- Cape tulip growing mainly along a paddock boundary, with some scattered plants beyond.
- English and Scotch broom dotted along the edge of native bushland.
- A dense patch of gorse growing along one paddock fence line.

Why control these weeds?

- Cape tulip is poisonous to livestock. Although animals tend to avoid eating it because it makes them sick, this puts extra grazing pressure on good pasture plants, making it easier for Cape tulip to spread fast.
- English broom can form thick stands that push out other plants, threatening a nearby patch of rare native orchids.
- Gorse burning along a fenceline during a bushfire can completely destroy the fence.

What does the landholder value?

The owner's top priority is keeping the grazing paddocks healthy for his livestock and making sure the property is ready for bushfire season. Long-term, he dreams of bringing more nature back to the creek, especially to attract birds. His teenage daughter, who loves native plants, even discovered a special orchid patch on the property!

Challenges and opportunities

- Rabbits and foxes are hiding in the thick gorse.
- Birds often nest in broom.
- Where to start – what's the Strategy?

Year 1	
1	Set up photo points to track progress by taking regular photos of weed infestations.
2	Start by targeting the scattered Cape tulip plants (the outliers). Use the right techniques and herbicides – like 'tongs of death' or spot spraying – to remove them.
3	Create a 3-metre-wide weed-free zone around the main Cape tulip infestation and slowly push it back year by year. Make sure the boundary fence is included.
4	Improve pasture management by doing soil tests and adjusting grazing pressure if necessary.
5	Talk to the neighbour about working together to create a Cape tulip buffer zone along the boundary.
Year 2	
6	Keep controlling Cape tulip – push the weed-free front back another 2 metres and check last year's treated areas for regrowth.
7	Get a contractor to mulch the dense gorse infestation (this process is called grooming).
8	Carefully manage the English broom using bushcare methods that protect the orchids. Follow the "Five Steps to Thriving Native Vegetation" guide.
Year 3	
9	Continue controlling Cape tulip and checking previously treated areas.
10	Spray any new gorse seedlings that pop up within three years of the first control effort to stop seed production. Plant new pasture seeds to help the good grasses grow back.
11	Keep an eye on the broom areas and remove any missed or new plants.

Cape tulip, a bulb weed

Cape tulip in flower

STEP 5

Follow-up, monitoring, maintenance and review

Staying on top of follow-up and maintenance is crucial for the long-term success of your weed control efforts. Without it, even the best work can go backwards.

This step ties together your early observations and mapping from Step 2 with your updated control strategies. Weeds can be stubborn, but with persistence, good timing, and smart planning, you can absolutely stay ahead of them! Regular maintenance of treated areas will be needed over several years - but every visit gets you closer to a weed-free space.

Stay committed to follow-up

Following up after initial weed control is essential. In the season after your first treatment, monitor your site closely. Tiny plants that were missed can quickly add to the seed bank if not removed early.

After your first follow-up, keep monitoring regularly each year. How often you'll need to revisit the site depends on:

- How exposed the area is to disturbance from water, wind, and animals
- How quickly the weeds can grow and set seed
- How much competition there is from preferred plants
- Mass germination events
- Regrowth of woody weeds
- Extreme events like droughts, fires, or floods that trigger new growth.

Always time your follow-up work based on the types of weeds you're managing, making sure weed numbers stay well below where you started.

Revisit your photopoints

Nothing keeps you motivated like seeing how far you've come!
Review your photopoint records and your weed control plan regularly. Celebrating small wins along the way helps you stay energised and gives you a chance to adjust your strategies as needed.

Re-assess your control techniques

Once you've picked the right time for follow-up work, choose the best method to suit your conditions.

For example, after tackling a thick gorse infestation by mulching the main mass, you might follow up by spot spraying or cutting and swabbing new regrowth. This approach massively reduces the amount of herbicide needed because you've already removed most of the bulk.

Similarly, if you're following up broom control, you might hand-pull or spot-spray seedlings that emerge the next season. Broom plants usually take 2-3 years to flower and seed - but remember, those seeds can survive in the soil for decades!

Always aim to cause as little soil disturbance as possible when pulling weeds to avoid triggering even more weed growth.

Conditions can change, so don't be afraid to adjust your methods. For example, if you notice native plants growing where you once blanket-sprayed herbicide, shift to more targeted approaches to protect the new growth of desirable species.

Create a calendar for weed control

Planning ahead makes a huge difference.
Use resources like the **PIRSA Weed Control Handbook** to figure out the best times of year to target each weed. Plotting your activities on the calendar in the **Effective Weed Control Action Plan** helps you see how the work is best spread across the year and helps you stay organised for the best results.

Maintenance isn't just about removing weeds - it's about building a healthier environment too! Planting extra paddock trees, creating shelter belts, installing washdown areas for equipment, and working with your neighbours to control weeds can all help protect your property and create benefits for your whole community.

Always plan to put something back.

Bare soil is a magnet for weeds! Many weeds are pioneer plants that thrive in open ground. A key part of maintenance is thinking about what you'll grow to replace them.

Focus on:

- Strengthening pastures with perennial grasses
- Planting in gaps on revegetation sites
- Protecting new plants from pests

Revegetation

Once your plants are established, nature starts doing some of the work for you!
A newly planted site can be maintained by carefully spraying a small 'halo' of herbicide around each plant, while brush cutting the rest of the site. Over time, the growing plants will naturally outcompete weeds by shading them out.

Bushland

If your bushland is in reasonable condition, native plants will often bounce back well once weeds are removed. Where sites are badly degraded, some extra planting might be needed to rebuild strong natural competition.

Paddocks

After weed control, reseeding paddocks with perennial pasture grasses helps crowd out future weeds. Combined with careful grazing management and strategies like crop rotation and companion planting, this can greatly reduce ongoing weed problems.

Managing watercourses, wetlands and dams

Watercourses need more frequent checks and careful planning. Weed control is usually best done in dry months, so timing matters.

Work in small sections and follow up with revegetation before moving on. This protects bank stability and lets you learn how your site responds over time.

Patrol your property boundaries

Keeping your boundaries clear makes a big difference - for you and your neighbours!

Prioritising weed control along fence lines helps:

- Reduce the spread of weeds between properties
- Lower fire risks along fences
- Make fence maintenance easier
- Build good relationships with neighbours

Prevention: Stop weeds from arriving in the future

It's much easier to prevent weeds than to control them later. Here's how:

- **Check hay** for weeds before feeding out
- **Contain new livestock** for a few days so they can pass weed seeds
- **Clean shoes, clothes, and equipment** after visiting other properties
- **Watch out for weedy garden plants** – some can escape into bushland or along creeklines
- **Create a single wash-down area** for tractors, floats or farm equipment
- **Brush your dog's coat** if they've been through a weedy site

Common declared weeds and native look-a-likes

Declared weed	Impacts	Native look-a-likes

African lovegrass
(Eragrostis curvula)

- Competes with pasture
- Competes with native grasses

Tussock grass
(Poa / Austrostipa)

Blackberry
(Rubus fruticosus)

- Crowds out native plants and desirable pasture
- Promotes soil erosion
- Fire hazard
- Harbours pest animals

Native raspberry
(Rubus parvifolius)

Boneseed
(Chrysanthemoides monilifera)

- Invades native vegetation
- Can form dense stands

Hop goodenia
(Goodenia ovata)

Bridal creeper
(Asparagus asparagoides)

- Invades and smothers native vegetation
- Forms dense impenetrable thickets

Old man's beard
(Tillandsia usneoides)

Common declared weeds and native look-a-likes

Declared weed	Impacts	Native look-a-likes

Cape / French broom
(Genista monspessulana)

- Alters soil, creating favourable habitat for weeds
- Forms dense thickets
- Invades pastures
- Can be toxic to stock
- Increases fire risk/ hazard
- seed is long-lived in soil

Large leaf bush pea
(Pultenaea daphnoides)

English / Scotch broom
(Cytisus scoparius)

- Forms dense stands
- Invades roadsides, non-improved pastures and disturbed native vegetation
- seed is long-lived in soil

Narrow-leaf bitter-pea
(Daviesia leptophylla)

Gorse
(Ulex europaeus)

- Invades native vegetation, creeklines, pasture, and neglected land
- Excludes desirable species
- Harbours pest animals
- Forms dense stands
- seed is long-lived in soil

Gorse bitter pea
(Daviesia ulicifolia)

Common declared weeds and native look-a-likes

Declared Weed	Impacts	Native Look-a-likes

Spiny rush
(Juncus acutus)

- Invades damp areas, and creeklines
- Very sharp tips
- Injures animal skin and eyes
- Forms dense thickets
- Outcompetes desirable species
- Inhibits movements of animals and humans
- Reduces habitat for native animals

Jointed rush
(Juncus kraussii)

Tree heath
(Erica sp.*)*

- Invades and outcompetes native vegetation
- Forms dense stands on roadsides and in paddocks
- Can increase fire risk and hazard

Pink heath
(Epacris impressa)

Watsonia
(Watsonia meriana var. bulbillifera)

- Invades native vegetation, roadsides, and damp areas.
- Plants flower prolifically following fire
- Spreads quickly through corms (like bulbs), and bulbils (like seeds)

Native iris
(Patersonia occidentalis)

Capeweed

Watsonia *(Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera)* growing next to dam

Would you like to learn more?

For a full suite of links and additional information, tools and references aligned to the topics in this guide, please visit the weeds page on our Landscape Hills and Fleurieu website at landscape.sa.gov.au/hf/weeds. This is also where you will find your Effective Weed Control Action Plan template.

Following the steps in this guide, will help you build a more efficient strategy and take action to control weeds at a property scale. Be prepared to follow up your efforts and stay diligent in patrolling for new outbreaks. This is the best way to solve small weed problems before they grow into large, expensive infestations. Don't forget that there are many professional weed control contractors who can bring local expertise to complicated and hard to manage areas.

Now that you've got the knowledge, it's time to map you're your weeds issues, work out your strategy and select a control technique that suits your time and budget.

Download your **Effective Weed Control Action Plan template** from our website and get started today!

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA HILLS AND FLEURIEU

Connect with us
Web: landscape.sa.gov.au/hf
Email: hf.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au
Phone: 08 8391 7500
Upper Level, Corner Mann & Walker Street
Mount Barker - Peramangk Country SA 5251