

Treat Weeds



Learning Guide

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Front cover photo shows
flower of Wild Passion
Fruit (*Passiflora foetida*)

Student name:.....

Student number:.....

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Treat Weeds*. You may need to identify and treat weeds when doing revegetation or landscaping work when working for your council, doing ranger work or when managing your own country. *Treat Weeds* is aimed at students who will be treating weeds under supervision. Training should be completed on the job over an extended period of time.

NOTE

If you are working with chemicals you should do a chemical use unit such as Apply Chemicals Under Supervision as well as *Treat Weeds*. There are other higher level qualifications you need to consider if working on your own or if your team is planning to undertake weed contracts. The most relevant are SMARTtrain and ChemCert at Level 3 and the Professional Ground Spray Applicators Licence.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

To complete this training you will need the following:

1. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
2. Safety gear for field work including first aid kit and water.
3. Secateurs and other equipment for collecting weeds, and a plant press and newspaper for pressing weeds.
5. Tools and equipment for treating weeds such as rakes, shovels, hoes, mattocks, saws and spray packs.
6. Chemicals for treating weeds.

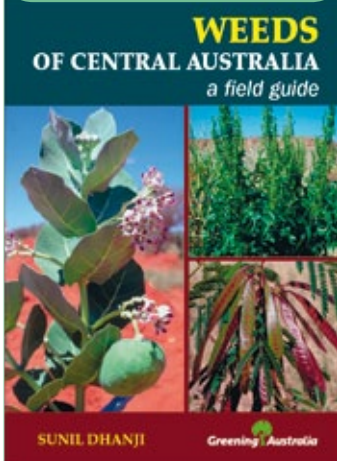
ASSIGNMENTS

There are three assignments you will need to complete.

Some of these assignments may go towards your final assessment.



Section	Assignment	Competent (C) Not yet competent (NYC)	Date Achieved
Getting Prepared	Assignment 1. Project Risk Assessment		
Treating Weeds	Assignment 2. Treat Weeds Using Chemicals		
Finishing Up	Assignment 3. Record and Monitor Weed Treatment		



1A. COLLECTING INFORMATION

Information about treating weeds can be obtained from many sources. There are a few excellent weed books available that will help you, see the References on page 40. The two main field guides for the NT are:

- *Weeds of Central Australia: a field guide* (2009) by Sunil Dhanji and published by Greening Australia.
- *Weeds of the Wet/Dry Tropics of Australia: A field guide* (2002) by Nicholas Smith and published by the Environment Centre NT.

There is also information available online.

1. For information on Northern Territory weeds, including the *Northern Territory Weed Management Handbook*, go to the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport.



www.nretas.nt.gov.au/natural-resource-management/weeds

2. PestGenie has information about herbicides including labels and MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets). The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has good information about chemical safety, picking the right chemical and legislation.



www.pestgenie.com.au and www.apvma.gov.au

3. For information on community activities about weeds go to Weedbusters – an Australian Government sponsored program aimed at increasing the awareness about weed issues nationally.



www.daff.qld.gov.au/4790_7012.htm

4. For Australia wide information and some very useful weed links go to Weeds Australia (an Australian Weeds Committee National Initiative), or the Australian Government's Weeds in Australia page, or the Invasive Species Council.



www.weeds.org.au and www.weeds.gov.au and www.invasives.org.au

1B. TREATING WEEDS SAFELY

There are many dangers associated with treating weeds. It is important that you be aware of some of the potential dangers so you can avoid getting injured or poisoned.

Some of the things you can do to keep yourself safe include:

1. Wear thick gardening gloves at all times.
2. Wear appropriate clothes for outdoors – at least long trousers, hat and boots.
3. Watch out for snakes, spiders, wasps etc. and rusty iron or broken glass in amongst weeds.
4. Keep safe distances away from other workers around hand tools.



5. Extreme caution should be taken using chemicals and motorised machinery. Only properly trained people should use motorised machinery and chemicals.
6. Always carry a first aid kit and make sure someone has a first aid certificate.
7. Always consult expert advice about weed control before you start to avoid any dangerous pitfalls.
8. Always lift heavy objects correctly to avoid injuring your back (see Resource 1 for correct lifting procedures).



CHEMICAL SAFETY

The use of chemicals, such as herbicides, when carrying out any weed control work requires some extra special precautions. Only people with the right training should use chemicals.

Chemical poisoning can occur through the skin or eyes, by swallowing, or by breathing it in. Pregnant women should not use chemicals.

- Poisoning can happen quickly, for example if poison is swallowed. Symptoms can include fatigue, headache, sweating, dizziness, fever, intense thirst, increased rate of breathing, vomiting, uncontrollable muscle twitches, pinpoint pupils, convulsions, inability to breathe and unconsciousness.
- Poisoning can also happen bit by bit over many years. For example someone who does not wear good PPE all the time might get slowly poisoned. Symptoms may include nervousness, slowed reflexes, irritability, or a general decline in health.

Personal Protective Equipment

The following PPE should be considered when using chemicals.

1. PVC or other chemical resistant gloves.
2. Goggles or protective glasses – they protect your eyes which easily absorb chemicals (a full face shield is needed for mixing some concentrated chemicals).
3. Dust mask or respirator – these help prevent the inhalation of dangerous chemicals.
4. Cotton hat – protects the head from chemicals and can be washed clean after each use.
5. Rubber boots – prevents spray getting onto your feet - the overalls should cover the outside of the boots so drips don't run down the inside of the boot.
6. Cotton overalls – suitable for general chemical work and will protect work clothes underneath – wash after each use or use disposable overalls.
7. PVC apron – used to protect clothing when mixing concentrated chemicals (a PVC suit may be necessary for some dangerous chemicals).



NOTE



For any poisoning immediately contact the following

**POISONS
INFORMATION CENTRE**

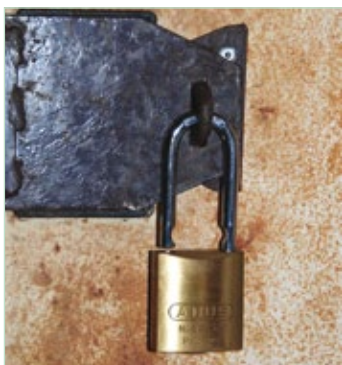
Phone 131126

Call from anywhere in
Australia 24 hours a day

1 – GETTING PREPARED

Safe use of chemicals

1. Always read the label before using the chemical.
2. Do not transport chemicals in the passenger compartment of a vehicle.
3. Be careful when opening containers to avoid spills and only mix chemicals in areas where spills can be controlled.
4. If there is a spill tell your trainer immediately.
5. Never pour chemicals into other containers (like drink bottles).
6. Do not spray herbicides near bystanders or unprotected workers.
7. Always have clean water on hand for washing eyes (including eyewash bottle) and other spills.
8. Remove all PPE including overalls after spraying and before eating or smoking.
9. Always wash hands before eating or smoking.
10. Always wash your personal protective equipment, such as overalls, separately to all other clothes.



Safe storage of chemicals

1. Keep all chemicals **locked** in an appropriate chemical store such as a shed or cabinet.
2. The chemical store must have a folder with the labels and MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for every chemical in the store.
3. The chemical store must have running water on hand and should also have an eyewash facility.
4. Do not store other things in the chemical store such as food.
5. Always store your personal protective equipment away from the chemicals.



Before you begin, use this checklist to confirm you have followed good safety procedures and have all the right resources.

SAFETY CHECKLIST ACTIVITY



Long trousers, shirt and boots		
Hat and gloves		
Sunscreen, insect repellent and sunglasses		
Dust mask and rubber gloves		
Respirator		
Rubber boots		
Eyewash bottle		
Soap		
Water		
First aid kit		
Notified others and have phone/2 way radio		
Checked weather, road and fire reports		
Permits (if required) and maps		
MSDS folder		