



Notice to NSW Turf Growers

BIOSECURITY ALERT

Supply of Fireweed contaminated turf to the ACT

Background:

Fireweed continues to be found growing in couch turf imported from Fireweed infested areas in NSW, particularly the Richmond and Hawkesbury region.

- Fireweed, a Weed of National Significance, Prohibited Pest Plant and Noxious Weed in the ACT and NSW, has been found growing in contaminated couch turf laid in new suburb developments and residential gardens and nature strips.
- Fireweed is poisonous to horses and cattle and has the potential to invade native grasslands and quickly degrade agricultural pasture.
- Fireweed is a small herb up to 70 centimetres tall, often with a cluster of yellow daisy flowers. The leaves are bright green between 2 centimetres to 7 centimetres long. The photo attached shows a recently germinated Fireweed plant in winter dormant couch turf at the suburb of Forde.
- To date over \$35,000 has been spent by the ACT Government removing Fireweed plants that have germinated in imported turf and spread to surrounding areas.



Photo of Fireweed in Forde.

Advice:

1. NSW turf growers are advised NOT be supply turf grown in Fireweed infested areas in NSW, particularly the Richmond and Hawkesbury region into the ACT. Fireweed occurs in all coastal regions of NSW.
2. Reckless supply of fireweed into the ACT is an offence under the NSW *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* with a maximum penalty of \$5,500. The Act states that 'An occupier of land (including a public authority) must not use or permit the land to be used for the purpose of disposing of, transporting or selling soil, turf or fodder, if the occupier knows, or ought reasonably to know, that there is a plant on the land that is a notifiable weed in any part of the State'.
3. Reckless importation or supply of fireweed into the ACT is an offence under the ACT *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005* with a maximum penalty of \$5,500.
4. Generally the Fireweed is present in the turf as seed which then germinates when conditions are suitable. Treatment with a pre-emergent herbicide prior to delivery is ineffective because the seed is present in the thatch, not the soil and most pre-emergent herbicides are deactivated by the presence of organic matter in the thatch layer.
5. Further information can be found in the Fireweed Pest Plant Management Plan at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2014-333/default.asp>

The ACT requests your cooperation in keeping the ACT's farmlands and nature reserves free of Fireweed

Thank you



Stephen Hughes
ACT Biosecurity Manager
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