

Rubber Vine

Rubber Vine Infestation



Infestations of *Cryptostegia grandiflora* (Rubber Vine) as an understory woody shrub in closed and open forests or as a vigorous climber.



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Method

Burning can be used as an effective control method of Rubber Vine both independently and in conjunction with other methods such as chemical control. A moderate to high intensity fire when there is good soil moisture (after ~50mm rain) will provide the best initial results. Burning in the early dry or after a storm will ensure adequate soil moisture to promote quick recovery of grasses following the fire. Ensure there is a suitable fuel load (3-4 tonne/ha) before burning to allow fire to infiltrate the infestation. Once a high intensity fire has reached the edges of the rubber vine, the green leaves of the plant will ignite and carry the fire through the infestations.

A fire of high intensity can kill up to 70% of mature plants and most juveniles, as well as impacting on the seed bed. Rubber vine seed has a high viability, but is short lived (12 months). For this reason, it is important to follow up the fire with further control methods. For scattered infestations, a single fire followed up with basal barking, cut stumps, or foliar spray should suffice. For denser infestations, two consecutive burns will be required followed by a chemical treatment.

Fire can also be very effective as a final step to chemical control, by killing the seed bed and cleaning up the dead vines.

Production

Regular fire management will prevent infestation of agricultural land by rubber vine. Rubber vine generally starts along riverine areas or against rainforest edges where fire management is not commonly used. When the initial infestation occurs, action should be taken to include the rubber vine patch with the broad scale burning area to prevent further spread of the infestation. When conducting a burn, soil moisture is crucial to stimulate grass recovery quickly after the fire. This will also reduce the possibility of erosion and infestation by rubber vine and other woody weeds. Aim to seed with native grasses soon after the burn to provide competition against sprouting of rubber vine. Continuing effective management and good pasture growth will compete against rubber vine.

Conservation

When controlling rubber vine infestations adjacent to rainforest or riparian edges, care should be taken to ensure fires do not encroach into these sensitive vegetation types. Frequent high intensity fires will slowly reduce the extent of these vegetation types, and possibly promote rubber vine and other weed infestations. Use of terrain and/or wind direction should be utilised to direct fire towards the infestations encroaching on these ecosystems.

Burning with a mosaic will provide refuge for fauna. Aim to keep around 20% of the landscape unburnt to ensure the longevity of fauna species. Ensure there is moisture in the soil when burning to allow for natural regeneration of native species.

