Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Biosecurity alert: Siam weed

Chromolaena odorata

Siam weed (*Chromolaena odorata*) is considered one of the world's most invasive tropical weeds. It is native to central and southern America. It is now a widespread serious weed throughout the tropics and subtropics, where it has become a major land management issue. Its phenomenal growth rate out-competes crops and native vegetation, its high nitrite levels may be toxic to grazing animals, and it may cause allergic reactions and asthma in allergy-prone people.

Siam weed is present in Queensland and Northern Territory and has been found on Christmas Island. Siam weed is not present in Western Australia (WA). In WA, Siam weed is a control category C1 declared pest under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) because of its invasiveness, high potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts.

Siam weed has been present on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) since early 1980. It has successfully spread throughout Home and West Islands and has also been recorded on Horsburgh Island.

Control efforts have nearly cleared the weed from inhabited islands on CKI, but ongoing surveillance and reporting is crucial for the long-term success of the program.

Siam weed is an upright sprawling perennial shrub. It has a phenomenal growth rate and forms dense, tangled thickets, with a massive seed production. It can grow up to 3m free-standing or 20m tall if it climbs over other trees and shrubs. It dies back to the crown in the dry season, but promptly reshoots and can grow back quickly after fire, clearing or slashing. It poses a major fire hazard in the dry season.

LOOK for this weed

Siam weed has hairy, triangular-shaped leaves with serrated edges and pitch forking veins. New leaves have a characteristic purplish blush and feel soft and velvety to touch. Leaves can emit a pungent odour when crushed.

Plants have white to lilac pink flowers in bunches from May to October. Seeds are blackish with a tuft of white or brown hairs (5–6mm long) on one end. Plant roots are shallow and fibrous with a basal ball just below the soil surface.



Siam weed flowers



Siam weed in palm trees



Siam weed seeds



Siam weed West Island airport

What can you do?

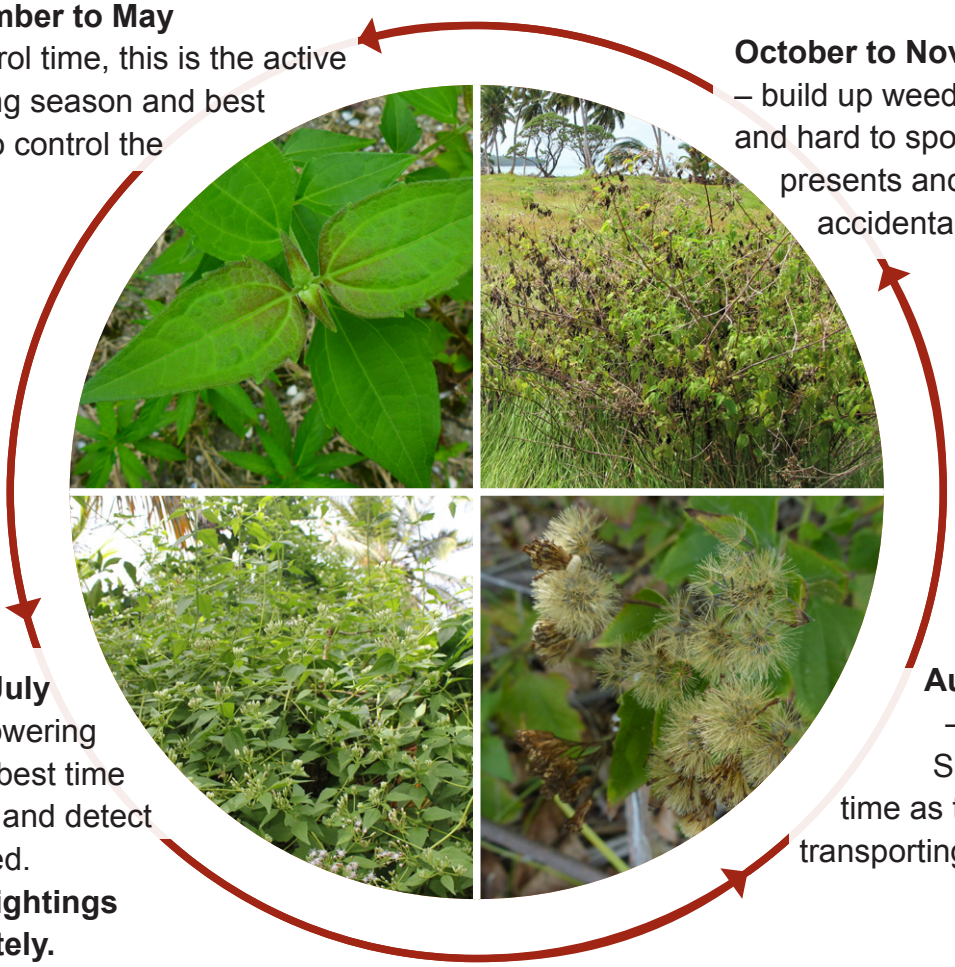
- Don’t remove soil or plant material from infested areas.
- It is important to keep clear of seeding plants due to the higher risk of accidently transporting seeds to new areas.
- Plants can be physically removed ensuring the basal ball is entirely removed from the soil. If stems are snapped off at the base, the plant will regrow from the basal ball left in the ground. This may be effective for small infestations.
- Know what the plant looks like and report suspect sightings immediately.

Siam characteristics

- Siam weed produces more than 80,000 seeds per plant, per season, which are easily spread by the wind.
- Fine barbs on the seed help them stick to clothing, machinery, equipment, and animals. Most seeds germinate immediately after rain, but they can remain viable in the soil for more than six years.
- Disturbance or removal of existing vegetation encourages the establishment of Siam weed.
- The easiest time to detect Siam weed is during flowering, from May to October. Look for clusters of 10-35 small white to pale pink tubular flowers.
- The best time to control Siam weed is during its growth period, of December to May.
- If a large infestation is found, please report the sighting to the CKI Shire.

Siam weed lifecycle

December to May
– control time, this is the active growing season and best time to control the weed.



October to November
– build up weeds are stressed and hard to spot. Some seeds still presents and risks remain of accidental spread.

June to July
– main flowering time, the best time to survey and detect Siam weed.
Report sightings immediately.

August to September
– seeding time, avoid Siam weed during this time as there is a high risk of transporting seed to new areas.

REPORT this pest

1. Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Home and West Islands)

- The Shire Rangers can be contacted on (08) 9162 7602. If your call is not answered immediately, please call the Shire office on (08) 9162 6649 and leave a message and your call will be responded too as soon as practicable.
- Ranger Razali Zainiel and Assistant Ranger Jamil Ibram are normally on duty from 7.00am – 4.00pm Monday –Thursday and 7.00am – 12.00pm on Friday.
- Ranger (Razali Zainiel) - (08) 9162 7602 | ranger@cocos.wa.gov.au
- Assistant Ranger (Jamil Ibram) - (08) 9162 7602 | jamil.ibram@cocos.wa.gov.au

2. Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

Pest and Disease Information Service
(08) 9368 3080
padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

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