

WEED CONTROL BY GOATS

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Easy to control weeds

The marked preference shown by goats for blackberry, *Rubus fruticosus*, briar *Rosa rubiginosa*, barberry *Berberis vulgaris* gorse *Ulex europaeus*, narrowleaf hopbush *Dodonaea attenuata*, manuka *Leptospermum acoparium* and groundsel bush *Baccharis halimifolia* can result in their complete control. The profitability of control has been assessed for blackberry and briar (Vere and Holst 1979; Holgate 1983). Gorse (Drause et al. 1984; Harradine and Jones 1985) and narrowleaf hopbush (Davies and Mitchell 1985).

Moderately hard to control weeds

Poa tussock *Poa labillardieri* and rushes *Juncus spp.* are moderately attractive to goats, being lightly in autumn, spring and summer but heavily in winter or at other times when alternative feed becomes scarce (Campbell et al. 1984; Lambert et al. 1981).

Thistles are eaten by goats during flowering and seeding. These include spear *Cirsium vulgare*, marsh *Cirsium palustris*. Californian *Cirsium arvense* (Rolston et al. 1983): slender *Carduus pycnophthalmus* (Harradine and Jones 1985): and variegated *Silybum marianum*.

Other common weeds eaten in this category are horsehound *Marrubium vulgare*, dock *Rumex crispus* and regrowth of *Eucalyptus spp.* Control of these weeds is responsive to goat grazing pressure and seasonal effects.

Difficult to control weeds

Serrated tussock *Nassella trichotoma* (Campbell et al. 1979), blady grass *Imperata cylindrica* (Norton and Deary 1985) and St. John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* are only controlled if the weed constitutes a small portion of the total pasture. For example, in a degenerating pasture or where traditional methods have reduced the amount of weed. Control is effected by the pasture competing with a partially defoliated weed (Campbell et al. 1979).

Weeds not controlled

Sifton bush *Cassinia arcuata*, turpentine *Eremophila sturtii*, Bathurst burr *Xanthium spinosum*, budda *Eremophila mitchellii*, punty *Cassia eremophila* and bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum* are rarely eaten by goats.