

Gorse Management: An Overview

Good gorse control is difficult, with each situation needing to be assessed individually to determine the appropriate strategy.

Integrated control A combination of methods, e.g. mechanical, herbicide, and biological control, is needed for maximum chances of long-term success.

Herbicides Apply herbicide when plants are actively growing (during spring to early summer and after first fall rains). Check for regrowth in 12 months. Do not spray when plants are in full flower or when bees are active. Triclopyr has proven to be the most effective herbicide; complete coverage of all branches and plant surfaces is essential. *See Table for various herbicide techniques.*

Grazing Goats and sheep are very good for controlling gorse, but it will grow back when animals are removed.

Controlled Burning is a useful tool before grazing or in dense thickets before spraying. It stimulates seed germination so needs to be part of an overall integrated control program. Use of burning must be carefully assessed and locally coordinated due to the highly flammable nature of gorse.

Mechanical control, using bulldozers or tractors with rippers, is useful for controlling large infestations. Follow-up management with herbicide is essential for lasting control.

Hygiene Thoroughly clean all machinery, tools and footwear, after use in any gorse-infested area, especially after mechanical control with large equipment.

Biological control agents are being released that will hopefully reduce the vigor of gorse, making plants easier to control in the long term in combination with other methods.

Follow-up Killing existing plants is only the start of a long-term control program. The large quantities of seed in the soil will quickly germinate and re-establish new infestations if follow-up work is not repeatedly carried out.

For further Gorse Control Guidance, please read:

*Understanding and Controlling Gorse
and
Available Gorse Management Strategies*

documents can be found at: <http://gorseactiongroup.org>