



# Burning to get the upper hand in gorse control

**Marie & Tony Curtis, Corindhap.**

Tony and Marie Curtis moved into the district 9 years ago, and as members of the Corindhap Neighbourhood group, are part of a concerted effort to rid gorse from their area.

Over the last nine years, the Tony and Marie estimate they have reclaimed at least 35 acres of land proving that with a concerted effort, gorse can be eliminated and productivity increased.

## The Problem

Marie explained that when they first arrived the gorse problem was such that they could not even identify their property boundaries.

"To define our boundary fence lines, we had to use a bulldozer." The dozer made short work of compacting the plants and reducing the considerable volume into large heaps," she said.

## The Solution Burning

Tony said that once they had some clear space around the boundary, burning the heaps, as well as the larger stands of gorse proved to be a cheap and convenient way to eliminate huge volumes and clear sizable areas of land.

"The heat of the fire obviously destroyed some of the seed in the soil, but what was not destroyed germinated prolifically.

"When the seedlings appeared, it was quite easy to boom spray them with glyphosate - a cheap and effective way of killing thousands of immature plants," he said.

Tony stressed that if the seedlings were not sprayed, the problem would be back thick and fast in two to three years.



In areas where gorse had taken over, a dozer was used to push the weeds up and burn them off.



After the bull dozer had finishing clearing the site, the area was cropped to reduce the seed bank of gorse.

### Cropping

Marie described their gorse control three year time line for eradicating gorse and establishing improved pastures.

"In the first year, we burnt over winter and early spring, slashed the debris and boom sprayed the emerging seedlings."

"After successfully killing the emergent seedlings, we worked up the area and sowed down a summer crop of turnips," Marie said.

She explained that this helped germinate more of the residual seed in the soil, which was in turn killed by cultivating again in the autumn of the second year when they established an annual hay crop.

In the autumn of the third year, improved deep rooted perennial pasture was sown down, but even after this extensive cropping, small gorse seedlings appeared.

### Follow-up

Tony explained that some of the seedlings did get established and that without vigilant follow-up the weed could easily have returned to be a significant problem.

"To kill the stronger seedlings, maintenance and vigilant spot spraying over the next two years was the key

to attaining a gorse-free status." "We found Grazon to be very effective, and useful in spot-spraying as it did not kill the pastures," he said.

Marie and Tony now budget for at least the equivalent 5 litres of Grazon herbicide each year for their follow-up spot spraying activities.



Marie Curtis hopes other groups will learn from the Corindhap experience.

### For more information contact:

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