



Volunteers and the use of herbicides

Volunteers and weed control

A report of volunteer hours for the period between July 2012 and June 2013 shows that a total of 6,575 volunteer hours were spent helping the ACT Parks and City Services to control and manage weeds in ACT nature reserves, national parks, urban parks and open space.

Weed control methods volunteers assist with include:

- 1) Manual removal of invasive plants;
- 2) Cut and dab application of glyphosate to a cut stump or branch; and/or
- 3) The use of hand spray devices using either glyphosate or 'Brush-Off' at recommended rates.

Chemcert training

All volunteers wishing to assist in the control of weeds using spray packs or knapsacks in ACT parks and reserves require training in the safe use and handling of herbicides. Each year the ACT Parks and Conservation Service fund approximately 30 community volunteers to undertake Chemcert training. Chemcert training is not so much a practical "how to control weeds" course as it is a course about using herbicides safely. The modules covered in the one-day course are:

AHCCHM201A Apply chemicals under supervision

AHCCHM303A Prepare and apply chemicals

AHCCHM304A Transport, handle and store chemicals.

AHCCHM101A Follow basic safety rules

The Chemcert training will remain valid for 4 years. If volunteers remain active in using herbicides to assist control weeds, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service can fund you to undertake a renewal course.

Distribution and Storage of Herbicides

The distribution and storage of herbicides may not be relevant to all volunteers. Some groups designate a person within their group to store, handle and manage the stock of herbicides. Some groups will rely on the District Ranger to deliver herbicides to their scheduled activity.

Herbicides are supplied to volunteers by the ACT Government in accordance to the Volunteer Policy and associated Standard Operating Procedures
http://www.tams.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/387667/PCL_Volunteer_Policy_2009.pdf

Volunteers who are accredited (i.e. Chemcert) can undertake weed control using herbicide products containing active ingredients:

- Glyphosate (Roundup);
- Fluroxypr (Starane); and
- Metsulfuron Methyl (Brushoff).

The Volunteer Policy states that:

- Herbicides will only be issued to Chemcert accredited volunteers, it is then the responsibility of the Chemcert accredited volunteer to ensure chemicals are stored, transported and applied in accordance with their training;
- Herbicide will only be issued with the registered label attached;
- It is the responsibility of the volunteer who has been issued with the herbicide to ensure that it is stored in a safe place, out of reach of children and within a container capable of withholding the volume of the herbicide issued in the event of a spill or leak occurring. The product should also be stored away from direct sunlight;
- The person issued with the herbicide is required to sign an indemnity form stating that they agree to take responsibility for the appropriate and safe use and storage of the herbicide issued;
- Volunteers must report any spills or leakages to PCS as soon as possible;
- Individual volunteers will be issued with a maximum of three litres of undiluted liquid chemical (Roundup) and maximum 10 grams of powder chemical (Brushoff), at any one time;
- When transporting, pesticides should be carried in the back or tray of a truck, ute or trailer - pesticides should not be carried in the same compartment as the driver or passengers.

Reporting

All herbicide use by volunteers must be recorded on a spray record sheet. This sheet will be provided when the herbicide is issued. The completed record sheets must be returned to the relevant ranger or coordinator prior to being reissued with herbicide.

Practicing your skills

Volunteers can refer to the ParkCare Coordinator or District Rangers for advice on the most effective use of herbicides in controlling weeds. Safe spraying techniques can be demonstrated to volunteers by PCS staff as part of volunteer training.

Weed identification courses will also be available to assist volunteers in the correct identification of weeds. New volunteers may wish to work closely with more experienced volunteers when first using spray packs or knapsacks to control weeds.

If groups do not have their own knapsacks, knapsacks can be borrowed from the Stromlo Depot ACT Parks and Conservation Service or one of the Catchment Groups.

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