



RESPONSIBLE CHEMICAL USE



Responsible chemical use can minimise the potential for contamination of our precious water resources

Learning how to manage and handle chemicals safely and responsibly not only ensures your personal protection, but also provides environmental protection for our precious natural resources, like water, soils, native plants and animals, marine and coastal environments.

This fact sheet is part of a series designed to help you:

- increase your awareness of correct and responsible use of all chemical types
- gain the knowledge required to effectively control weeds, pest insects and diseases without damaging, contaminating or polluting our environment
- adopt best practice to minimise chemical use and maximise personal safety, and
- play a part in improving water quality and environmental health.

Weeds Near Waterways and Drains

Have you thought about what happens when you use chemicals to control weeds near stormwater drains and around waterways?

Unless you are careful, some of the chemical may get washed into local creeks and rivers, and from there into our water storages, water supplies for domestic use or primary production, or out to sea.

Farm, garden and household chemicals can have adverse impacts on the environment, with water quality and aquatic ecosystems particularly at risk.

However, good planning and responsible chemical use can minimise the potential for chemical contamination of aquatic ecosystems and our water supply that has to be of drinkable quality.

Minimise the Risks

Chemical users can minimise the risks to waterways and water supplies from chemical sprays and other chemicals by:

- carefully reading and exactly following all the directions on the chemical product label
- buying only the amount of chemical needed for the task at hand and using only chemicals registered for that use

- mixing the spray well away from stormwater drains, waterways, dams or bores to minimise the environmental and safety risks from any spillage or leakage
- washing equipment where the wash-down water will be contained and not flow into stormwater drains, waterways or water storages, and
- measuring chemical and water volumes carefully and applying the spray at the right rate and coverage.

Planning

When it is necessary to spray near waterways and water storages, use only chemicals registered for that use.

However, every effort should still be made to avoid chemicals entering the water or reaching areas where it can be washed into waterways or water storages.

Good property design and a planned approach to chemical use can minimise the risk of agricultural or domestic chemicals reaching areas where they can be washed into waterways or water storages.

Some suggestions include:

- Establish corridors of vegetation as buffers along waterways and around dams.
- Have a property plan, clearly identifying waterways and flow paths, available for spray contractors.
- When spraying beside waterways or dams, direct the spray away from the water towards the bank.
- Use alternatives such as slashing to remove the weed bulk before spraying regrowth.
- Use methods that require less herbicide and allow greater control, such as cut and swab, instead of spraying to control woody weeds like Blackberry and Broom along waterways.
- Cultivate across slopes where possible to minimise water runoff from sprayed areas into dams or waterways.

Other fact sheets in this series

- Accuracy and Effectiveness
- Alternatives to Chemicals
- Bait Station Safety
- Best Time to Spray
- Calibrating Spray Equipment
- Personal Safety
- Understanding Product Labels #1
- Understanding Product Labels #2
- Using Glyphosate





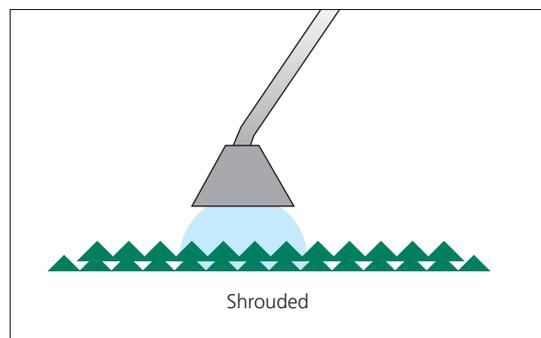
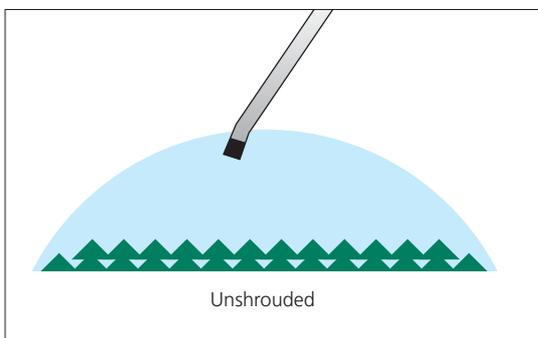
Risk Minimising Actions

The following actions will all help minimise the risk of contaminating our water resources.

- Don't apply too much spray.
- Avoid over-spray by correct application and following the Directions for Use on the label.
- Don't spray when rain is expected or just before irrigation.
- Don't spray if it is windy.
- Ensure the spray doesn't go "off-target". Off-target spray can result from applying too much chemical or simply missing the target. Chemical dripping off foliage is a clear indication of too much spray.
- Avoid spray drift by using the correct nozzles and spray pressures. Drift can be minimised by spraying at lower pressures, or using pressures and nozzles that produce large droplets. Including an effective wetter and spreader in the spray mix will also help.
- Flat-fan nozzles are preferred for herbicides. If using a cone nozzle, it should be shrouded.
- Follow correct equipment cleaning procedures to avoid contaminated runoff from wash-down sites flowing into waterways or water storages.
- Avoid spillages when handling chemicals.



If using a cone nozzle, it should be shrouded to ensure the spray doesn't go off-target



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When using chemicals more is not better!

If you are uncertain about any aspect of chemical use, please seek professional advice from the place of purchase or the manufacturer before proceeding.

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