Lantana Infestation

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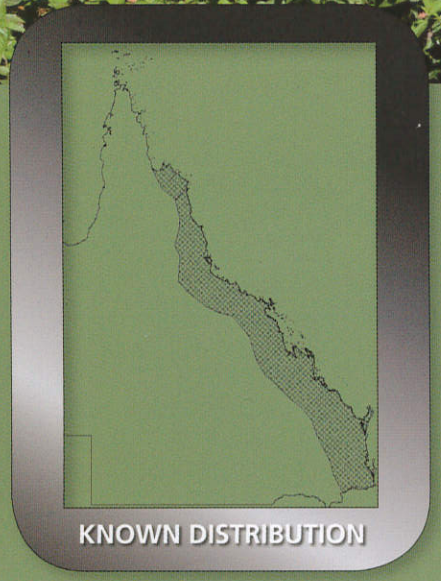
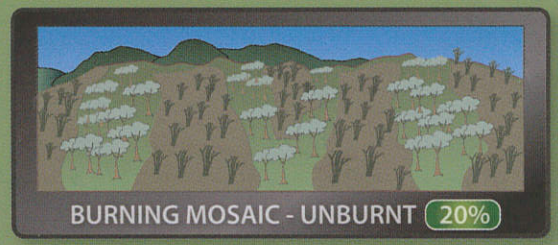
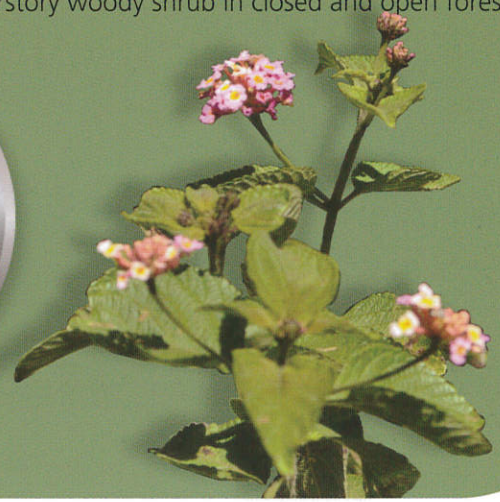
Infestations of *Lantana camara* as an understory woody shrub in closed and open forests







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Method

Burning of lantana can be used as the first step for successful control of an infestation. A slow moving, backing fire of moderate intensity when there is good soil moisture (after ~50mm rain) will provide the best initial results. Aim to burn down slope to achieve the desired fire intensity. Burning in the early dry or after a storm will ensure adequate soil moisture to promote quick recovery of grasses following the fire event. Ensure there is a suitable fuel load (3ton/ha) before burning, or alternatively, burn after defoliation of the lantana from chemical treatment or frost.

Follow up treatment is essential for control of lantana. Lantana is known to proliferate through suckering when bare ground is present and native species haven't recovered. A hot fire will normally kill any seed bed below the shrub. Once regrowth has reached 0.5-1m in height, spot spray with an approved herbicide, as juvenile plants are more susceptible to chemical treatment. A second, low intensity burn may be required 12-18 months later to eradicate any standing stems.

Production

In order to get suitable fuel levels to create enough heat underneath and surrounding the infestation, paddocks may need to be spelled from grazing. The aim is to achieve a ground layer of grass to grow against the lantana infestations, to help increase the fuel load. Alternatively, defoliation of the lantana by frost or herbicide treatment can create leaf litter on the ground, thus creating a suitable fuel level.

When conducting a burn, soil moisture is crucial to stimulate grass recovery quickly after the fire. This will also reduce the possibility of erosion and reinfestation by lantana and other weeds. Aim to seed with native grasses soon after the burn to provide competition against possible sprouting of lantana. Effective management and good pasture growth will compete against lantana.

Conservation

When controlling lantana infestations adjacent to rainforest or riparian edges, care should be taken to ensure fires are infrequent. Frequent, hot fires along these edges will slowly reduce the extent of these vegetation types, and possibly promote lantana and other weed infestations within these susceptible ecosystems. Use of terrain or wind direction should be utilised to direct fire away from the rainforest/ riparian edge.

Burning with a mosaic will provide refuge for fauna. Aim to keep around 20% of the landscape unburnt to ensure the longevity of these species. Ensure there is moisture in the soil when burning to allow for natural regeneration of native species.

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