



Dieback Management for Remnant Vegetation on Private Property

Hygiene Notes for Farmers

The protection of dieback free remnant vegetation on private properties is a priority for the South Coast community. The distribution of disease across the South Coast (from Walpole to east of Esperance) is chronic. Very few large uninfested patches of bush remain. Dieback free bush on private property offers a great opportunity to protect these plant communities. Some of these may be the last examples of disease free communities occurring anywhere on the South Coast and you have the greatest ability to control access to these areas and protect these important areas of bush from this disease.

If you have large areas of bush that is in good condition (minimal grazing impact and fenced off, no weeds etc) and you suspect it is free of dieback it is important to consider ways to protect this by minimising the movement of infected soil (via machinery, equipment and other materials like plants) to the area. Some activities and actions to consider:

- Consider activities that are conducted adjacent to/in the area like maintaining fire breaks, fencing, grading etc. ***(This will help establish the disease risks to the area/s.)***
- Is the equipment and vehicles going to this area free of soil and materials? ***(Taking soil and other material that could be/is infected into the area to be avoided.)***
- Ensure work is carried out in dry soil conditions. ***(One of the easiest hygiene approach as very low risk of picking up infected soil/mud in these conditions.)***
- Plan works and activities to start in areas NOT infested. ***(By starting with clean machines and equipment you can ensure you are not introducing the disease and then work can move to other areas without significant interruption to works plans.)***
- Do you have known infested bush sites on your property and what activities occur in this area? (Establish what activities could be moving infected soil from here to areas you are trying to protect.)

What to look for

- Death of indicator species (Common and reliable indicators include grass trees, banksias, dryandras, chitticks). Start looking in moisture gaining sites and when conditions are warm and soil is moist you will see “fresh deaths” which will be a bright yellow/golden colour.
- Generally dieback will destroy the plant completely - partial death of limbs is likely to be from other causes.
- A range of indicator species provides greater confidence in determining disease presence.
- There should be an age range in plant deaths - from plants with no leaves, to a plant with brown leaves, to a plant that has recently died and is a fresh expression (the bright yellow/golden colour).

Common NRM activities on farms and associated dieback minimisation strategies

Fencing of remnant and riparian vegetation

- When adjacent to native vegetation, ensure that all tools and machinery are free of mud or soil. (including tyres, vehicle, underbody, trailer, chain links, buckets, augers, post hole diggers, star pickets, etc)
- Try not to transport soil between post/hole sites via equipment etc – more importantly not into uninfested bush
- Work from dry (high points) to wet (low points) in each paddock
- Brush soil from footwear and equipment and spray with methylated spirits to disinfect between sites

Revegetation (seedlings and direct seeding)

- Direct seeding is preferred over seedlings as the latter poses a risk to introduction of dieback
- If using seedlings, source stock where possible from nurseries with Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) accreditation (See list of nurseries attached)
- If using mulch, ensure that it has been well composted (the heating process kills Phytophthora)

Weed Control

- If weeds are being manually removed they should immediately be placed in a container to prevent the spread of potentially infected plant or soil material

