Declared Plant Policy
Berry Heath (*Erica baccans*)

Berry heath is a shrub reaching 2 metres, with fine sclerophyll foliage that makes it resemble a native plant. It is naturalised from garden escapes in South Australia.

Management Plan for Berry Heath

**Outcomes**
- Native vegetation protected from degradation by berry heath.

**Objectives**
- Prevent the spread of berry heath to uninfested areas due to planting.
- Control high priority infestations in the control area according to regional management plans.
- Contain larger and low-priority infestations of berry heath in the control area.

**Implementation**
- Biosecurity SA to publicise the new status of berry heath as a declared plant.
- Natural Resources Management (NRM) authorities to respond to any reports of sales of berry heath.
- NRM authorities in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges and South East regions to delimit infestations and prioritise those that threaten significant native vegetation sites for destruction or containment.

**Regional Implementation**
Refer to regional management plans for further details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NRM Region</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges</td>
<td>Destroy infestations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alinytjara Wilurara</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyre Peninsula</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern and Yorke</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Arid Lands</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Murray-Darling Basin</td>
<td>Prevent sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>Contain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Declaration

To implement this policy, berry heath is declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* throughout the whole of the State of South Australia so that sale and road transport of the plant can be prevented. The movement or transport of the plant on a public road, by itself or as a contaminant, or the sale by itself or as a contaminant is prohibited.

In the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges and South East regions, NRM authorities may require land owners to control berry heath plants growing on their land. NRM authorities in these regions are required to control plants on road reserves and may recover costs from the adjoining land owners.

Berry heath is declared in category 3 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow its movement or sale can only be issued by the regional NRM Board pursuant to section 188.

The following sections of the Act apply to berry heath throughout each of the NRM regions noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections of Act</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>175(1) Prohibiting entry to area</td>
<td>AMLR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads</td>
<td>AW EP KI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant</td>
<td>NY SAAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods</td>
<td>SAMDB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 Requiring notification of infestations</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182(1) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sections 175(2) and 177(1) do not apply to cut flowering stems as used by florists.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2020, or in the event of a change in one or more regional management plans for berry heath.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

Berry heath takes 2-3 years to begin producing seed and has high seed production. The seeds are tiny and disperse short distances by gravity, wind, water, slashing or soil movement. Long distance dispersal is mainly dependant on human activity by planting, or accidental transport of soil containing seeds on vehicles and machinery. Germination is stimulated after bushfires.
Berry Heath policy

Impacts

Berry heath is competitive in native vegetation, invading gaps and preventing regeneration of other shrubs due to shading and possibly allelopathic effects. It can completely dominate the lower strata, displacing native species.

It has no known impacts in agricultural production or human health, but is unpalatable to stock except as seedlings.

Potential distribution

Berry heath is endemic to fynbos vegetation on the sandstone of Table Mountain, South Africa. It requires well-drained neutral to acidic soil of low nutrient status and a rainfall over 500 mm concentrated in the winter and early spring.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Heaths are difficult to manage in native vegetation because they grow among native plants, have high seed production and may form a soil seed bank.

Burning is not recommended as it is likely to favour heaths due to their rapid regrowth. In areas that have been burnt, a follow-up treatment before the seedlings reach flowering size is important.

Hand removal of small heath plants including the root is possible in moist or light soil. Heaths are not specifically listed on herbicide labels; herbicide applied by spray, stem injection or to cut stumps according to available permits can be highly effective.

No biological control agents are available for heaths.

Persistence

Berry heath is a shorter-lived shrub than tree heath. It is usually killed outright by fire and regenerates from seeds buried in the soil; however, it may sucker after slashing or a cool burn.

It has a deeply penetrating mycorrhizal root system that enables it to survive hot dry summers.

Current distribution

Infestations of berry heath are currently known in the Mount Lofty Ranges from Houghton to Mount Compass, and at Naracoorte in the South East region of South Australia. It is also naturalised in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.
State Level Risk Assessment

Assessment using the Biosecurity SA Weed Risk Management System gave the following comparative weed risk and feasibility of containment scores by land use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use</th>
<th>Weed Risk</th>
<th>Feasibility of control</th>
<th>Response at State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native vegetation</td>
<td>negligible 10</td>
<td>very high 2</td>
<td>monitor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considerations

Berry heath was introduced as a garden ornamental shrub in colonial times and first recorded as naturalised in 1975. It is grown commercially for the cut flower trade.

Risk assessment indicates a management action at State level of monitoring in native vegetation. However, the local weed risk of berry heath is higher in high rainfall areas. In the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region a strategy of destroying infestations is justified, and a strategy of containment in the South East.

Synonymy

*Erica baccans* L., Mant. Pl. 2: 233 (1771).

Taxonomic synonyms:

Other common name include berry flower heath.