



Government
of South Australia

Declared Plant Policy

This policy relates to natural resources management under section 9(1)(d) of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act), enabling co-ordinated implementation and promotion of sound management programs and practices for the use, development or protection of natural resources of the State. Specifically, this policy provides guidance on the use and management of natural resources relating to the prevention or control of impacts caused by pest species of plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community, as per object s7(1)(f) of the Act.

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.

Best Practice Implementation

- Regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide to respond to any reports of sales of berry heath.
- Landscape boards in the regions where berry heath is declared under section 192(2) of the Act 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:

berry heath policy

Region	Actions
Alinytjara Wilurara	Prevent sale
Eyre Peninsula	Prevent sale
Green Adelaide	Destroy infestations
Hills and Fleurieu	Destroy infestations
Kangaroo Island	Prevent sale
Limestone Coast	Contain
Murraylands and Riverland	Prevent sale
Northern and Yorke	Prevent sale
South Australian Arid Lands	Prevent sale

Declaration

To implement this policy, berry heath is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* throughout the whole of the State of South. Its movement or transport on a public road, by itself or as a contaminant, or sale by itself or as a contaminant are prohibited.

The Hills and Fleurieu, and Limestone Coast landscape boards and Green Adelaide may require land owners to control berry heath plants growing on their land. These two landscape boards and Green Adelaide 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 sale or road transport can only be issued by the regional landscape board or Green Adelaide pursuant to section 197.

Under the *Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020*, Regulation 27 specifies the conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 186 and may transport wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying berry heath on public roads. Regulation 28 specifies conditions under which a person is exempt from the operation of section 188(2) and may sell wool, grain or other produce or goods carrying berry heath. Note that certain produce or goods may be excluded from these general movement and sale exemptions by Gazettal Notice of the Chief Executive of the Department for Environment and Water.

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

Sections of Act	Region									
	AW	EP	GA	HIF	KI	LC	MR	NY	SAAL	
186(1) Prohibiting entry to area										
186(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
188(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
190 Requiring notification of presence										
192(1) Land owners to destroy the plant on their properties										
192(2) Land owners to control the plant on their properties			X	X		X				
194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves			X	X		X				

Sections 186(2) and 188(1) do not apply to cut flowering stems as used by florists.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2025, 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.

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.

berry heath policy

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 Limestone Coast 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:

Land use	Weed Risk	Feasibility of control	Response at State Level
Native vegetation	negligible 10	very high 2	monitor

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 Green Adelaide and Hills and Fleurieu regions a strategy of destroying infestations is justified, and a strategy of containment has been adopted in the Limestone Coast region.

Synonymy

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

Taxonomic synonyms:

Erica bacciformis Salisb., Trans. Linn. Soc. London 6: 352 (1802).

Erica moniliformis Salisb., Prodr. Stirp. Chap. Allerton 293 (1796).

Other common names include berry flower heath.

Hon David Speirs MP
Minister for Environment and Water

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