



Daisy – *Bellis perennis*

DESCRIPTION

The daisy is a very familiar plant to those who are prepared to admit to having made them into daisy chains as a child, and to those who did it but won't admit it now.

It's a low growing perennial plant that grows in a rosette form. The leaves are dark green, spoon-shaped, and grow to about 60mm long by 20mm wide at the broadest point, blunt at the outer end and narrowing at the inner to form a broad stalk.

The flowers are of course the most easily recognised feature, and appear on unbranched, leafless flower stalks. There are many narrow white florets encircling the bright yellow disc floret in the centre.

The daisy often appears in clumps of several rosettes located together which, if carefully dug up, will generally prove to be connected by a system of short rhizomes.

The preferred habitat is in short grassed areas where its very low, flat physical configuration does not put it at a disadvantage due to being overhung by taller species. It prefers moist soil and does well in shaded areas.

Daisies are very common in lawns and recreational turf areas, and in most regions of New Zealand do not create a serious problem in pastures because they rarely achieve a presence sufficient to have any effect on pasture production. However, once the daisy does achieve about 30% occupation of available area pasture quality is measurably reduced, and the daisy does aggressively increase to this level of pasture invasion in Otago and Southland.

Stock generally do not eat the daisy when grazing. It is also not susceptible to the porina caterpillar, and daisies are often the last man standing in a pasture seriously affected by that pest.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

In longer pastures (e.g. typical dairying pasture) the height of the pasture species will minimise the presence of daisies. Shorter sheep pastures,

especially in the lower half of the South Island, are more susceptible to unacceptable invasion. However, because trials have demonstrated that pasture production does not suffer significantly until daisy presence reaches about 30% cover, there is limited justification for control spraying before that point.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Complete eradication of daisies in pasture with a single application of any treatment is practically impossible. However it is possible to reduce the population of daisies by more than 90%, which can give the pastures species ascendancy again. There will always be some survivors and some regrowth, probably because of the nature of the subterranean rhizome system, but subsequent treatments will progressively further reduce this 'miss' rate.

Spot Spraying

- **GrassMate** at 6m/L applied anytime. Grass friendly, but will suppress clover.
- **Glyphosate 360g/L** applied at 1L per 100L water, plus 100ml **SprayWetter** penetrant. If using **Granny** use 450g/100L water. This option is not grass friendly.

Boom Spraying

- **2,4-D** is a little more effective than **MCPA**. **Paraquat** is also used at low rates.
- **GrassMate** applied at 2L/Ha is effective and is often used in turf situations, because it is grass-friendly but not clover friendly.
- **Cobber** herbicide used at 1L/Ha is effective and grass-friendly, but will severely damage clover.

Note that both **GrassMate** and **Cobber** can be applied with less clover damage if sprayed immediately after the pasture has been hard grazed, when the amount of clover leaf present is minimal but the daisies are still prominently present.

