

WEED FILE: RUSHES



Soft rush – *Juncus effusus*

Native rush – *Juncus edgariae*

Jointed rush – *Juncus articulatus*

DESCRIPTION

There are quite a few rushes; we haven't listed them all here because what's true for one is equally true for all, as far as control considerations go.

Rushes are a group of grass-like plants. They mostly have cylindrical, hollow 'leaves', and no conspicuous flower.

Rushes are erect, clumping plants, and most species will grow to well over a metre in height. They are very successful invaders, and scattered colonies of clumps will, with just a couple of years' neglect as encouragement, be joining up with each other and stealing your paddocks before you can say, 'Bugger!'

Of course, there can be an upside to rushes. Many livestock farmers say that a few colonies of rushes make an excellent shelter environment for lambs and calves. But usually rushes are just pinching your pasture space, and you'll want to eradicate or minimise them.

Rushes like waste areas, wet areas, lower-quality pasture, peaty soils, and the margins of wetlands. They are widespread and common throughout New Zealand.



MANUAL CONTROL

You can dig them out. I did it as a kid; it's an awful job and they grow back almost as fast as a 11-12 year-old can dig them out. If you do dig rushes out, you must be sure to remove all of the rhizome (underground) structure from the soil. Otherwise they will grow back for sure.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Only glyphosate makes any sense. All the grass-friendly sprays are useless against these grass-like species. But the problem with glyphosate is that it also kills all the useful pasture grass species. So you've got to be smart about how you use glyphosate.

• Few, scattered rushes:

Hand (spot) spray with **Glyphosate** liquid at 150ml per 15L knapsack, or 1L per 100L by handgun. Alternately, use **Granny** at 65g per 15L, and 425g per 100L.

• Moderate infestation of rushes:

Once there's too many rushes for hand spraying to be practical, the best approach is to use a towed weed wiper, with 1 part **Glyphosate** liquid per 3 parts water, or 1 part **Granny** glyphosate granules per 5 parts water. Weed wiping protects the valuable pasture by passing safely above it, contacting and therefore killing only the rushes.

• Heavy infestation of rushes.

When the paddock's no longer worth using because of extent of rushes, get rid of the rushes and the remaining pasture by spraying out completely using 6L **Glyphosate** liquid, or 2.7kg **Granny** granules, per hectare.