

HOW TO MAKE A

Montbretia Weed Wiper

STEP 1

COLLECT THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- stainless steel kitchen tongs, 20-22 cm long
- empty 1.5 or 2L plastic bottle with handle
- sandpaper, wire brush or a stone
- tin snips and scissors
- a short piece of elastic or cord
- hammer
- pieces of high density foam [Step 6]
- water resistant contact adhesive (NOT water soluble) [Step 7]
- scraps of cardboard cut from a box (Step 8)
- wire or rubber bands [Step 8]



STEP 2 MAKE A HOLDER

Take your 1.5 or 2 litre plastic bottle and cut a hole in the side opposite the handle. See illustrations opposite and below in Step 4 for a guide to size and shape.

The holder is needed to ensure the herbicide does not drip on native plants, and so that the wiper can be put down without getting dirty.

It is also essential for carrying the wiper safely.



STEP 3 FLATTEN ENDS OF TONGS

Use the hammer to flatten the ends of the tongs so that the foam can be glued on to a flat surface.



STEP 4 CUT ENDS OF TONGS TO FIT HOLDER

Buy tongs approximately 20-22cm long. If they are too long to fit in the holder, use the tin snips to cut the ends to size so that they fit easily.



STEP 5 ROUGHEN SURFACE

The inner surface of the tongs needs to be roughened to allow the adhesive to stick.

Use 60 grit sandpaper or coarser. Emery paper, a wire brush, or a stone can also be used.



STEP 6 CUT FOAM TO SIZE

Foam needs to be dense rather than coarse. It should be between 10mm and 25mm thick.

Suitable foam can be purchased as offcuts from a specialist rubber store.

see Yellow Pages: Rubber Products — Retail



STEP 7 APPLY ADHESIVE

Use water-resistant contact adhesive.
available at hardware stores

Spread on inner surfaces of tongs, following the manufacturer's instructions.

Next apply to one side of each piece of foam. Allow to dry according to the instructions on the product.



STEP 8 FIX SPONGES TO TONGS

Apply coated sides of foam to inner sides of tongs. Separate the two pieces of foam with some cardboard.

Clamp lightly (eg with wire or rubber bands) without squashing the foam, for at least an hour. The cardboard ensures the sponges do not stick together. It can be removed after an hour or so.

Do not use the tongs until the adhesive has reached its full strength: follow the manufacturer's instructions.



STEP 9 STORE IN HOLDER READY FOR USE

Extend wiper life by rinsing it out regularly and not allowing it to become ingrained with dirt. Rinse thoroughly and dry after every use.

Wipers are best stored open - not clamped or tightly closed.

Use a piece of elastic or cord to stop the wiper from falling out when the user bends over.

For how to use your herbicide applicator, and what to put in it, see
How to Use Your Montbretia Weed Wiper



There are two methods of treating weeds with strappy leaves and corms, tubers or bulbs, such as Montbretia, Watsonia and Day Lilies. The first is to dig up the whole plant, but you must dig deeply to ensure that all tubers and corms are removed. This method is not suitable where soil disturbance will cause erosion.

The second method is the one which is discussed here. It involves wiping the leaves of an actively growing plant with a weak herbicide solution. (*Do not use this method on plants with fleshy leaves such as Agapanthus or Red Hot Pokers.*)

This fact sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with the fact sheet **How to make a Montbretia Weed Wiper**.

WHEN TO TREAT WEEDS WITH CORMS OR BULBS

All these weeds need to be treated when they are actively growing, ie late spring, summer and autumn. If Montbretia plants are old, with a long string of underground corms, it is often necessary to treat them more than once.

Plan on 3 treatments in one season:

1. Treat first in late spring when leaves are well developed.
2. Treat any regrowth of green leaves after 5-6 weeks.
3. Treat any further regrowth after another 5-6 weeks

STEP 1 COLLECT THE FOLLOWING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:

- Applicator bottle of dilute herbicide mix (if you need to mix your own see Steps 2 & 3)
- Weed Wiper and holder (see **How to make a Montbretia Weed Wiper** fact sheet)
- Chemical-resistant gloves and protective glasses
- Secateurs (in a tool belt/pouch)
- Weed bag
- Clean water for washing applicator (see Step 9)



STEP 2 MIX HERBICIDE

The law requires you to read the label and the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the herbicide you are using (ask supplier). An off-label permit PER9158 covers this treatment: <http://www.apvma.gov.au/index.asp>

This fact sheet does NOT cover all safety, handling, application, storage or disposal directions.

Decide how much herbicide you will need. Do not mix up more than you will use in one day. Put on safety glasses and chemical-resistant gloves (elbow length for mixing).

- Pour 500ml of very clean water into a 1 litre bottle for mixing. Any soil in the water will render the herbicide ineffective.
- Add 7ml Glyphosate (make sure it is a brand registered for working near water, if relevant, eg *Roundup Biactive*).
- Add 1ml adjuvant* to help spread the herbicide and penetrate the leaf (eg Pulse Penetrant).
- Add 1ml dye* – useful for showing where you have worked.
- Tighten the lid firmly then shake the container to mix the solution thoroughly.

*The dye and adjuvant you select should be registered for use with the herbicide: check the label. Discuss alternatives with a Bushcare officer.



STEP 3 DECANT HERBICIDE INTO APPLICATOR BOTTLE

Select an appropriate applicator bottle and label it .

A 100ml plastic bottle is usually adequate for one person working for a couple of hours. The bottle should have a small opening so the flow of the mix can be controlled. Ideally it should have a cap to prevent spillage when not in use. Pour herbicide into applicator bottle using a funnel.

Wear your impervious gloves.



STEP 4 CARRY EQUIPMENT TO WEED PATCH

Carry the applicator bottle in a holder. Do not carry both the bottle and the wiper in the same holder, as the wipers will become dirty if the applicator is put down on the ground at any time, and the bottle will get covered in herbicide if the wipers drip or drain.



STEP 5 PREPARE WEED PATCH FOR WIPING

Cut back native plants around the weeds you are planning to wipe with herbicide. Make sure that no part of the native plants can touch the weeds you are going to wipe – it is far better for the natives to be pruned than die because some herbicide touches them. Ferns are particularly sensitive.

Cut off any flowers from the target weed plants and bag them so they can be disposed of, preferably by hot composting.

STEP 6 WORKING A PATCH

- Assess the patch to be worked, then treat it in sections so you don't tread on or lean over treated plants and get herbicide on yourself.
- When you have finished one section put the wipers back in the holder to keep them clean. Do not rest them on the ground because if they get any dirt on them the herbicide mix will not work.
- Check regularly for any sign of soil on the wipers – any dirt particles will need to be cleaned off (see Step 9).

STEP 7 APPLY HERBICIDE TO THE WEED WIPER

Apply a small amount of herbicide to the foam pads on each arm of the wiper

Note: Apply enough herbicide to moisten each pad, but not so much that it runs off.

Extra care is needed the first time new wipers are used, and at the beginning of each work session, because new or dry foam will not absorb the herbicide readily and it will run off.



STEP 8 WIPE LEAVES

Start at the base of each plant, close the wipers around the leaf and slowly pull up along the leaf to coat it with a thin film of herbicide.

Be careful not to grip the leaf too tightly or it will pull away from the corm. The wiper should slide easily over the leaf – not 'squeaking' (too dry), nor dripping (too wet). Most of each leaf should be covered with the herbicide mix (approx 90%).

Note: Cut off the ends of any leaves that are drooping over nearby natives or a creek to stop potential drip. The leaf will bend down further after it has been coated with herbicide. If the herbicide drips on to a native plant, cut off the affected foliage immediately.

STEP 9 CLEANING MONTBRETIA WIPERS

As soon as any sign of dirt is noticed on the wipers, and at the end of the session, they will need cleaning.

Rinse both wipers and holder in clean water. Dispose of the rinse water on a patch of weeds, in a place where it will not run off on to native plants or into a watercourse.

If possible, squeeze and hang up wipers to dry off a little before continuing to use them, as the water held in the foam will dilute the mix. (A good excuse for a cuppa too!)

At the end of the work session rinse wipers and holders thoroughly as soon as possible to prevent dirt from getting ingrained in the foam.

Dry wipers thoroughly before storing.

Do not store them closed, as the foam will become compressed.

