

# Water Heath

*Erica caffra*

- Water heath is a large shrub or small tree, commonly growing to 3 metres (or taller).
- Lance shaped leaves are deep green, sometimes greyish green, up to 2 cm long.
- Produces small white bell-shaped flowers, covered in fine hairs, with a strong honey scent. *Also known as sweet-scented heath, it is one of the few Erica species with fragrant flowers.*
- Water heath flowers mostly in spring (Aug – Nov).
- Similar in appearance to the Spanish heath, water heath can be distinguished by its wider leaves, and the hairy, scented flowers.



shrub

Flowers  
(Visible distinctive hairs)



**Declared weed under the Biosecurity Act 2019**

## REMOVING WATER HEATH

### By hand

- Seedlings and small plants can be hand pulled in moist or sandy soil. Take care as plants break off easily and remaining roots can reshoot. Plants should be left on site to break down.

### Cut stump method

- Cut stems as low to the ground as possible and paint undiluted Glyphosate herbicide on the stump within 15 seconds.

### Foliar spraying

- Foliar spraying can be highly effective, providing it is carefully chosen, selectively applied to small plants and regrowth, and all foliage is covered when the herbicide is applied.
- Several herbicides are effective on water heath including Metsulfuron-methyl (eg. Associate), which is of very low toxicity. The addition of a wetting agent or penetrant will improve the uptake of any herbicide used.



leaves

## WATER HEATH LOCATION

Water heath has a limited distribution and is currently restricted to small areas on South Bruny.

**If you see water heath, please report these sightings to Kingborough Council.**

## IMPACTS

Water heath is a fast-growing plant and can establish in relatively natural ecosystems. It is tolerant of a wide range of conditions including frost, fire, waterlogging, and possibly drought. Without control, water heath can spread rapidly and cause devastation to waterways and surrounding habitats. It poses a very high risk to biodiversity because of its ability to form dense thickets that smother native vegetation, as well as prevent access for land management and recreational activities. Dense infestations of water heath pose a significant fire hazard.