Honey locust
_Gleditsia spp._

Honey locust is a large, rapidly growing tree. In the past it has been deliberately promoted and planted in Australia as a fodder tree and garden ornamental.

Although beneficial in the short term as stockfeed, the long-term consequences of its growth and spread are counterproductive. The honey locust tree is considered a serious pest due to its invasiveness and environmental, economic and social impacts.

**Description**

Honey locust is a deciduous, leguminous tree growing to 20m tall. From spring to autumn, it bears prolific green leaves (10 cm long), with about 12 opposite paired leaflets per leaf. In October–November it bears creamy, yellow hanging flower stalks (10cm long) that develop into 20–30cm long brown pods.

Some varieties have separate male and female plants, while other varieties are bisexual. The plant seeds prolifically every 1–2 years and the pods are relished by stock. The trunk and limbs of ‘wild’ trees bear very large crucifix-like spines that can grow to more than 50mm.

In the past, nurseries have sold grafted ornamental thornless varieties of honey locust. These so-called thornless varieties produce thorns at a later date or throw thorny progeny. This means that these varieties are subject to the same controls as the wild type. All varieties must be destroyed and cannot be sold anywhere in Queensland.

**Management**

**Bulldozing**

This method breaks plants at or above ground level. Once broken, honey locust will vigorously produce regrowth from broken bases and roots. Follow-up with some other form of control such as cultivation or herbicide is necessary.

**Cultivation**

On arable land, dozing following by deep ploughing can control dense infestations, only if followed by regular cropping and/or spot spraying of regrowth. If cultivation is abandoned, reseeding from nearby trees can be a problem.

**Reference:** The State of Queensland, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, 2007, “PP47, Weed Buster Fact Sheet”, the State of Queensland.