

# Maleny demonstration site

## Invasive Weeds Project

2025

### Project summary

The Maleny demonstration site is situated within the Maleny Community Precinct along the Obi Obi Creek in the Blackall Ranges. It was designed to educate landholders new to weed management and demonstrate a variety of weed management and ecosystem restoration techniques.



Map of the Maleny demonstration site featuring the numbered zones managed with different weed control methods.

The 6.5-hectare site was divided into 9 different zones, plus the creek bank, with different combinations of management options to provide a visual display of the outcomes. This included techniques such as chemical and mechanical controls (i.e. brush cutting, Posi-Track machine), hand-weeding, planting, solarisation of certain weed species and

transplanting native plants around site, and strangler fig planting for invasive tree management. We aimed to provide insight into the creation of a management plan, possible cost estimations and contributing environmental factors. Key messages included the importance of maintenance, breaking treatment into manageable blocks, working along waterways (erosion control) and weeds in the broader environmental context.

### Start and end dates

Site works began in November 2021 and will continue to be maintained and monitored until June 2026.

### What is the purpose?

Funded by the Environment Levy, the project was established to restore and improve vegetation communities across the site while sharing any knowledge and insights gained with our community.

### What did we find?

**It is important to note that results and costs are site specific and do not guarantee specific results.**

Overall, the demonstration site showed clear improvements including a reduction of weeds, successful planting establishment and an increase in native vegetation. Each zone yielded individual results and the process of understanding why provided valuable insights that shaped our key learnings.

Due to the limited timeframe and budget, the treatment across **the site was broken into manageable blocks in several ways**; the formation of the zones, creating different stages of the management process and prioritising weeds strategically to maximise native regeneration.

For example, the dense privet (*Ligustrum sp.*) thicket, initially the dominant weed species, was hindering native plant regeneration. In contrast, other priority weeds like Wandering Trad (*Tradescantia sp.*) were only present in small patches and the low groundcover habitat posed less of a barrier to native regeneration. Therefore, the **succession of treatments** focused first on removing privet to promote natural regeneration and less dominant weeds in later stages of the project. However, other sites may need a different approach depending on the weed species, severity of the infestation, and how it behaves within that specific area.

The strip clearing strategy used in the creek bank section was very effective and **significantly reduced the risk of erosion** while also creating easily manageable sections. Alternating 10-metre sections were cleared of weeds (large trees were left, including weed species), then planted, and then the following 10 metres would remain as-is until the plantings had established. Retaining large trees helped stabilise the soil and reduce erosion, while also supporting natural regeneration by attracting seed-dispersing birds. In later stages, the large trees will be selectively and slowly removed allowing the planting to replace them.

**Using the weeds to our advantage**, as seen above, and aiming for **maintenance rather than eradication** of weeds became critical in

developing our management plan and working within our time and budget constraints.

Additionally, **brush cutting** may be more useful in areas with herbaceous weeds that respond well to mowing rather than woody weeds, or for holding weeds back in the interim stages of maintenance. This was evident in Zone 4 where brush cutting was used on the privet which kept it short while the planting established. However, this needed to be redone very frequently (especially during summer) which could be impractical, time consuming or costly for some. This method also did not treat the privet, and chemical control was eventually introduced. It was noted that there was an increase in natives in this zone like basket grass (*Oplismenus sp.*), likely due to the seeds and cuttings being spread by the brush cutter.

More information will be available soon including detailed project costings, on the Council's Invasive Weeds Project webpage.

### How can you use this information?

- Develop a weed management plan using *The 4 Simple Steps* and gain a deep understanding of the specific site to help decide which techniques and tools would be most effective,
- Assess areas for potential to regenerate and support the natural processes,
- Understand that weed management is complex and requires on-going work. Goals are a guideline and not a rule. The presence of weeds is inevitable, but trends overall can help you recognise and measure your own progress.