

Perennial nettle

Urtica dioica

What does it look like?

Perennial nettle stems are slightly branched at the top, slender, rigid, square, and covered with numerous stinging hairs. Leaves are opposite (7.5 - 15cm long), heart shaped with sharply toothed edges and are covered with stinging hairs. It has separate male and female flowers on the same plant, in axillary clusters. Seed is 1-1.5mm long, flattened and oval.

Prefers damp rich soil, found on farmland, fence rows, thickets, stockyards, waste places and roadsides.

Why is it a problem?

Perennial nettle forms dense stands up to 1.5m tall. It produces rhizomes that spread up to 2.5m in a season, as well as seed. It is a threat to pastoral land as it displaces pasture species.



Control Methods

Physical control

Regular and persistent tilling (deep cultivation, or, turning over of the soil) will greatly reduce plant numbers. Smaller plants can be hand pulled, however, gloves must be worn. Mowing the flowering plants is an effective way to reduce seed set, but can increase plant density.

Herbicide control

Tordon Brushkiller is effective on perennial nettle, and Agpest note that nettle is very susceptible to MCPA and 2,4-DB which can be used in pasture with little effect on clovers.

Contact us if you need further control advice.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.