

CONTROL OF CYCAS CIRCINALIS WITH TORDON 50-D

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ABSTRACT.

The toxic plant Cycas circinalis can be eliminated from pastures by cutting off the top of the plant and pouring 2 ml. of Tordon 50-D concentrate into a small hole in the pithy core of the trunk. Cost of chemical is less than one cent per plant.

INTRODUCTION.

The cycad *Cycas circinalis* (Plate I) is widely distributed in the Territory. It is a serious problem in pastoral areas as ingestion of leaves and seeds causes unco-ordination of the hind quarters of cattle (Anon. 1963).

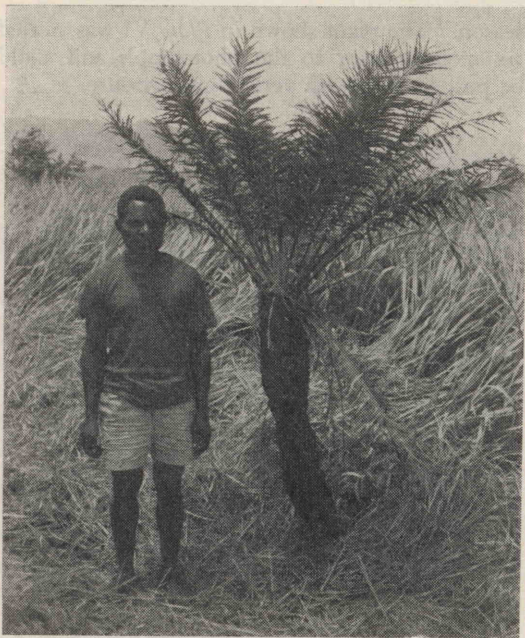


Plate I.—A mature plant of *Cycas circinalis* in native grasslands, upper Ramu Valley.

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† Registered trade name, Dow Chemical Company for a mixture of Picloram (4-amino, 3, 4, 6, trichloropicolinic acid) and 2, 4-D (2, 4-Dichlorophenoxy acetic acid). (Martin 1968).

Grubbing of the plant is expensive and unless all parts of the plant are removed, suckering occurs. Young suckers partially obscured by grass may be more dangerous than the original plants.

A grazer in the Ramu Valley has worked out a quick and effective method of controlling this plant using the herbicide Tordon 50-D.†

METHOD.

The method allows untrained labour to deal rapidly with large areas of infestation.

The inexpensive equipment required is shown in Plate II and consists of a bush knife, an oil can and Tordon 50-D.

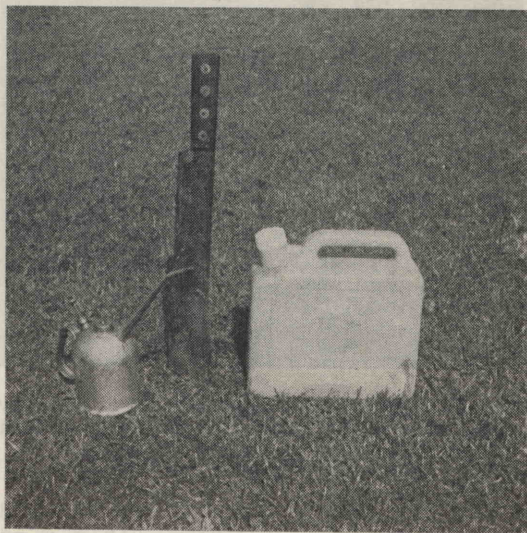


Plate II.—The equipment required is simple and cheap.

The top is cut off the plant with a bush knife (Plate III). A small hole is then made in the centre of the pithy core of the trunk (Plate IV). Into this is poured approximately 2 ml. of Tordon 50-D concentrate from an oil can (Plate V).



Plate III.—The top crown of leaves is cut off with a bush knife.



Plate IV.—A small hole is gouged out of the pithy central core of the trunk with the tip of a bush knife.

The pithy core of the plant rots leaving a hollow shell of leaf stem bases. There is no regrowth of leaves and treatment appears to be equally effective in both the wet and the dry



Plate V.—About 2 ml. of Tordon 50-D concentrate is squirted into the hole from the oil can.

season. The plant shown in Plate VI was treated six months prior to the photograph and could be pushed over with very slight pressure.



Plate VI.—Treated plant six months after treatment at the end of the wet season.

The cost of chemicals is small. One imperial gallon is equivalent to 4.545 litres. Therefore a gallon of Tordon would provide enough chemi-

cal to treat about 2,200 plants. Tordon currently costs \$19.25 a gallon so the cost of chemical is slightly less than one cent per plant.

On the property concerned, six labourers were able in nine weeks to clear a 1,500 acre paddock which was severely infested with cycads.

CONCLUSION.

This method of extermination is cheap, simple and rapid, and should be of considerable benefit to graziers who have problems with cycads.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

I should like to thank Mr. S. Staines of Gusap Downs for allowing me to bring his experience to the general notice of the farming community.

REFERENCES.

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