

Gazania (*Gazania* spp.)



Gazania is an escaped garden plant and a highly invasive weed of roadsides and coastal dunes.

Description

The gazania genus is comprised of multiple species which can hybridise freely, making them hard to identify. It's their growth habits which can help pinpoint the species, but this level of identification is not needed to effectively manage this weed.

Gazanias are a tough, low-growing perennial herb that grow to an average height of 30 cm. They grow in clumps and can also form dense carpets covering large areas.

Flower heads are brightly coloured and commonly have yellow or orange petals with dark or black bases (sometimes with a white dot). Other colours include cream, pink, red or maroon. Gazanias flower all year round but mostly in spring and summer. Flower heads can be 6 to 12 cm across, and the stalk height can reach up to 30 cm. Flowers close under low light and at night.

Leaves range from 4 to 10 cm long, slender with a pointed end and an indented central mid rib. Leaves vary from dark green and glossy to silver/grey and hairy. The underside of the leaves are distinctly white/silver. Young leaves can be lobed.

Impacts

Gazania is a highly invasive and adaptable weed that grows well on most soil types. In agricultural areas they invade cultivated and irrigated sites. Along roadsides they spread through maintenance activities such as slashing, grading and develop resistance to herbicide.

Gazania readily establish in sand dunes and can outcompete native plants with their high demand for nutrients and moisture. Gazania can also form dense monocultures, which exclude other plants and easily invade other native vegetation types, impacting on biodiversity.

Distribution

Originating from South Africa, gazania once was a popular groundcover in commercial and home garden plantings in Australia.

Gazania has since escaped gardens and invaded roadsides, native vegetation and agricultural land. It is now widely distributed across the Hills and Fleurieu region, particularly favouring coastal environments.

Gazanias produce an abundance of seed. One flower can produce over 60 seeds which are spread by the wind up to 1 km away. Seed also germinates next to the parent plant so new plants form a dense groundcover carpet. Seed can also be dispersed on vehicles, by mowing or carried in flood waters. And in some situations it can also spread by sending out rhizomes creating new plants.

Dumped garden waste including lawn clippings that contain the seed or plant material can contribute to this weed's distribution, along with the plant 'jumping the fence'. All these methods of reproduction and dispersal make it a highly successful environmental weed.

Declarations

Gazania is a declared weed under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. The sale of gazania or contaminated goods; and its movement on a public road are prohibited. It is the responsibility of the land owner to control these plants on their property.

Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu encourages the control of plants where gazania threaten biodiversity assets, particularly coastal areas.

However these sterile cultivars, all subject to Plant Breeders Rights in Australia, are exempt from the declaration:

- GT20 (marketed as Double Gold TM)
- Sugaja (marketed as Sunset Jane TM)
- Sugamo (marketed as Montezuma TM).

Control methods

Manual removal

For effective control, the entire plant, including its root system, should be dug out. In sensitive environments minimal disturbance techniques should be used. Dispose of plants in green waste bin. Where the plant can't be removed flowers heads should be taken off before they set seed. This can be done by mowing or brush-cutting.



Chemical

For advice on chemical options please refer to *Controlling declared weeds in SA* at: www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds

Always read the label of any herbicide to ensure it is suitable for its intended purpose and can be used safely.

Care should be taken to avoid herbicide contact with native plants and any herbicide spraying in native vegetation should be left to qualified bushcare operators.

Control is most effective when the plant is actively growing with new lush foliage and flowering. Don't spray when the plant is visibly under stress.

Garden Replacements

After removing the weed, replace with bush-friendly plants.

Search online for the *Coastal gardens- a planting guide* for some great replacement plants our native birds, insects and other animals will enjoy.

Other suggestions can be found via 'Grow Me Instead': www.growmeinstead.com.au or the plant selector tool: <https://plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au>

Contact us

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