

WEED FILE: DOCKS

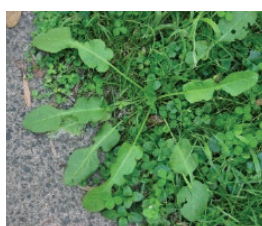
REVISED: SEPTEMBER 2025



Broad-leaved Dock



Clustered Dock



Fiddle Dock

Broad-leaved dock – *Rumex obtusifolius*
Fiddle dock – *Rumex pulcher*
Clustered dock – *Rumex conglomeratus*

DESCRIPTION

There are several dock species in New Zealand, with Broad-leaved Dock being the most common. While this file focuses on Broad-leaved Dock, the control methods are generally applicable to all dock species, such as Fiddle Dock and Clustered Dock.

Dock is a deep-rooted perennial weed that flowers and seeds primarily in spring and summer (October-February). It produces large, waxy leaves up to 35cm long and 15cm wide, growing from a single, extensive taproot that can extend 1-2 metres deep. Plants reach approximately 1 metre tall at flowering, producing erect stalks with small green-to-red flower whorls that develop into brown, triangular nuts containing numerous long-lived seeds.

The extensive seed production and longevity create persistent soil seed banks, making prevention of seed set crucial for long-term control. Seeds can remain viable in soil for several years, leading to ongoing germination waves.

HABITAT

Docks thrive in damp, poorly drained soils and are commonly found in:

- Dairy farm paddocks and gateways
- Wet areas around water troughs and drainage lines
- Compacted soil areas with poor drainage
- Disturbed ground and cultivation areas
- Roadsides and waste areas

The leaves of docks contain bitter tannins that make them unpalatable to cattle and horses, although they are usually readily eaten by sheep. This, combined with the plant's preference for damper soils, means docks become particularly problematic on dairy farms where cattle traffic creates ideal growing conditions.



MANUAL REMOVAL

Manual removal is ineffective due to extensive taproots (up to 2m deep) that regrow from remaining fragments. Grubbing tools cannot remove all viable roots. Mowing is futile as severed stalks regrow. Cultivation alone causes serious re-infestation from taproot regrowth and seedlings, requiring pre-treatment herbicides.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Optimal Timing: Spring application (October-December) during active growth before seed head development. Critical to control docks in new pasture as they out-compete immature pasture species.

Boom Spraying

Selective Options for Pasture:

- **Ranger 20g/ha** - Controls seedling and mature docks. Temporary yellowing; clover recovery up to 4 months
- **Pasture Star 4L/ha** - Grass/clover friendly. Good seedling control, suppresses later stages
- **WHACK 2,4-D 800 2.5kg/ha** - Controls seedlings, suppresses regrowth
- **Dicamba 500 SL 100ml + MCPA 750 260ml/100L water** - Will kill clover
- **Dicamba 500 SL 120-140ml + WHACK 2,4-D 800 535g/100L water** - Will kill clover

For Cereals:

- **WHACK 2,4-D 800 1.5kg/ha**
- **Ranger 20g/ha**

An alternative is **Lawnclean** 3-4.5L/ha/200L water BUT THIS IS NOT APPROVED FOR PASTURE/CROPLAND

Spot Spraying (knapsack)

- **GrassMate** 6ml/L covering 30m² - Grass friendly, suppresses clover
- **Dicamba 500 SL 15ml + MCPA 750 40ml per 15L water**
- **Dicamba 500 SL 20ml + WHACK 2,4-D 800 80g per 15L water**
- **Pasture Star** 100ml per 10L covering 250m² - Pasture friendly
- **Lawnclean** 120ml per 10L covering 250m² BUT THIS IS NOT APPROVED FOR PASTURE/CROPLAND

Spot Treatment

- **Cut'n'Paste Original** - Apply to crushed plant centre
- **Buckshot** - 2g per plant to crushed centre

Non-Selective Options

- **MSF600** 5g/ha (seedlings) or 10g/ha (established)
- **Ranger 20g/ha + Glyphosate 360, 540, or Granny** at label rates
- **Terbutylazine 500** 15-19L/ha + **Glyphosate 360, 540, or Granny** at label rates
- **Terminate** 15-25L/ha in 200-300L water

Important Notes:

- Glyphosate alone inadequate for dock control
- Follow-up spot treatment may be needed for larger plants
- Best results 1-2 weeks after grazing to maximize seedling emergence