



Control Options for Policemen's Helmet

General Information

A native of Asia, policeman's helmet, also called poor man's orchid, is a plant of moist areas and riparian zones. Policeman's helmet is an annual, which germinates in February to March, and flowers from June to October, growing up to 10 feet tall. When touched, the mature seedpod splits and ejects its seeds up to 20 feet. As this plant often grows along streams and ditches, seeds can be quickly spread downstream by water. A single plant can produce from 800 to 2500 seeds, which are viable for 2 years, and the seeds can even germinate under water.

Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Due to its shallow root structure, this plant is easily pulled and this is quite effective for all but very large infestations. Because it reproduces only by seed, hand-pulling should be done before flowering occurs. Mowing can be effective, but the area should be monitored in case plants resprout. Mowing equipment should be cleaned after mowing to avoid spreading seeds to other sites.



Chemical Recommendations

Policeman's helmet can be managed using specific herbicides. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. If spraying is the chosen option, spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.

Glyphosate (RoundUp®, many other brands) can be sprayed on actively growing plants. Plants should be sprayed before flowering, as sprayed flowers will still set seed.

2,4-D (marketed under many brands) can be sprayed on actively growing plants, prior to flowering.

***NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use.** Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.*

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Herbicide information is taken from the King County Noxious Weed Program.