



## SECTION 11

# Crop desiccation/spray out

## More information

Check current registered chemical labels at: [Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority](#)

[Farm Weekly: New canola weed control option](#)

[Direct harvesting canola with desiccation or swathing to reduce ryegrass seed set](#)

## More information

[Pre-harvest herbicide use. Fact Sheet.](#)

[Harvest options for canola – windrowing timing, direct heading, desiccation with Reglone and treatment with Pod-Ceal. Effects on yield and oil percentages](#)

[Using paraquat in canola, wheat or barley warning: crops will cause residue violations](#)

(For information on swathing, see [Section 12. Harvest.](#))

Chemical desiccation is an alternative to swathing and very effective where crops have lodged or where weeds have emerged in maturing crops. The most commonly used desiccant is diquat (Reglone®), which is registered for ground and aerial application on canola crops (refer to product label for application rates).

Desiccation can be a useful strategy on variable soil types; for example, where heavier soil types or drainage lines keep the crop greener for longer, a desiccant can hasten harvest of these areas and reduce the risk of problems arising from high moisture. It can also be used where swathing contractors are not available.

Diquat (Reglone®) has no detrimental effects on the seed or its oil quality if applied at the correct time. It works through contact action and requires almost complete coverage of the plant to work effectively. An experienced aerial operator can apply it to ensure uniform coverage with minimal spray drift.

The correct time for desiccation is when 70–80% of seeds have changed colour in middle pods, which is when the crop has passed its optimal swathing stage. The crop will be ready to harvest within 4–7 days (minimum 4 day Harvest Withholding Period) after the desiccant is applied, depending on the size and density of the crop.

Desiccate only an area of crop that can be harvested over a period of 1–2 days. The harvester must be ready within 4 days of a desiccant being applied to minimise the potential of losses from shattering. Withholding periods should be adhered to.

Other products not registered for use in canola should not be used as desiccants because issues with chemical residues can affect markets and quality of the canola.

Desiccation is generally considered a special-purpose management aid to be used when problems with windrowing, weeds or harvesting are anticipated. Specialist agronomic advice should be sought.<sup>1</sup>

Glyphosate (specifically Weedmaster DST®) is registered for pre-harvest application. It should be noted that the intention is to control weeds present in the crop at the approved timing, that is, *apply to mature standing crop from early senescence (minimum 20% of canola seeds as a random sample from various heights in the crop*

<sup>1</sup> P Carmody (2009) Windrowing and harvesting. Ch. 14. In Canola best practice management guide for south-eastern Australia. (Eds D McCaffrey, T Potter, S Marcroft, F Pritchard) GRDC, [http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/GRDC\\_Canola\\_Guide\\_All\\_1308091.pdf](http://www.grdc.com.au/uploads/documents/GRDC_Canola_Guide_All_1308091.pdf)

canopy from the main stem, have changed to a dark brown/black colour) prior to swathing or direct harvest (minimum 5 day Harvest Withholding Period).

It is not intended to be used to manage canola maturity (i.e. bringing grain moisture down for harvest). Speed of crop desiccation is dependent on crop stage, growing conditions and weather conditions during and after application.

*Table 1: Product registrations for pre-harvest weed control and desiccation VARY by crop type. Always check product labels (NOTE: Paraquat/diquat products, for example Spray.Seed®, are not registered for pre-harvest weed control or desiccation).<sup>2</sup>*

Crop	Paraquat	Diquat	Glyphosate
Canola	<p>Paraquat is not registered for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in-crop spray topping;</li> <li>• pre-harvest crop desiccation;</li> <li>• under-the-cutter-bar spraying during swathing or windrowing activities;</li> <li>• pre-harvest weed control;</li> <li>• spraying over the top of swaths or windrows</li> </ul> <p><b>DO NOT USE PARAQUAT PRODUCTS FOR THESE USE PATTERNS</b></p> <p>These use patterns are unregistered.</p>	<p>Pre-harvest crop desiccation (all states):            Spray when 70% of the pods are yellow and the seeds are brown or bluish and pliable. Canola ripens unevenly and is prone to pod shatter and seed loss. Direct harvest four to seven days after spraying.</p> <p><b>WHP: DO NOT harvest for at least 4 days after application.</b></p>	<p><b>Only weedmaster®DST® is registered for pre-harvest use in canola.</b></p> <p>Apply to mature standing crop from early senescence (minimum of 20% seed colour change to a dark brown/black colour from within the crop) prior to windrowing or direct harvest. Use the higher when crops or weeds are dense and/or where faster desiccation is required.</p> <p>DO NOT use on crops intended for seed            DO NOT harvest for 5 days after application to standing crops            DO NOT overspray windrows            DO NOT apply to standing crops and again at the time of windrowing</p> <p>Refer to the complete weedmaster®DST® label and critical comments section.</p>

<sup>2</sup> GRDC (2014), Pre-harvest Herbicide Use fact sheet. <http://www.grdc.com.au/GRDC-FS-PreHarvestHerbicide>