

Vegetation near irrigation pipelines and infrastructure

Tree roots are responsible for the majority of blockages and breakages to channels, pipelines and structures that supply irrigation water to MIA properties.

You can help prevent damage to infrastructure to allow us to optimise the efficiency of infrastructure and reduce maintenance costs, which in turn reduces costs to our customers.

How can I prevent damage?

We encourage anyone planting vegetation near irrigation structures or pipelines to choose a noninvasive plant species.

Some invasive species have been found to spread their roots up to 30 metres away from the tree base. When tree roots enter irrigation infrastructure, they grow quickly due to the constant source of water and nutrients. Roots can spread long distances within a pipe network and cause blockages and damage.

If you are planning to plant trees or shrubs near irrigation infrastructure, we can:

- Clarify the planting distances from infrastructure, required under the Development Rules
- Advise the location of underground structures such as pipelines
- Provide you with guidelines about what trees species can be planted near MI infrastructure, and
- In some circumstances, customers can request an exemption.

The top three most invasive root species plants common in the MIA are the Fig, Poplar and Willow trees.







Fig Tree

Poplar

Weeping Willow

What trees can I plant?

Root damage potential varies with different species. MI has a ranking system for root invasiveness, if you are considering planting, or if you are unsure about pre-existing vegetation, please contact our Environmental Planner prior to purchasing or planting, phone 6962 0200.

As a guideline, some invasive plant species likely to be found in the MIA are shown in the table on the below.

Species	Botanical Name	Invasiveness	
Fig / Rubber tree	Ficus sp.		Extreme
Poplar	Populus sp.		
Willow	Salix sp.		
Silver Maple	Acer saccharinum		Very High
Tree of Heaven	Alianthus altissima		
Sheoak	Casuarina sp.		
Red Ironbark	Eucalyptus sideroxylon		
Large Gum Tree	Eucalyptus sp.		
Jacaranda	Jacaranda spp.		
Liquid Amber	Liquidamber sp.		
Prickly Paperbark	Melaleuca styphelioides		
White Cedar	Melia azedarach		
Mulberry	Morus sp.		
Pine Trees	Pinus sp.		
Plane Tree	Plantanus sp.		
Peppercorn	Schinus sp.		
Elms	Ulmus sp.		
Wattle sp.	Acacia sp.		Medium
Silver Birch	Betula pendula		
Kurrajong	Brachychiton populneus		
Pecan	Carya illinoinensis		
Magnolia	Magnolia sp.		
Crab Apple	Malus species		
Photina	Photina Robusta		
Lilly Pilly	Acmena species		
Bracelet Honey Myrtle	Melaleuca armillaris		
Brisbane laurel	Pittosporum revoluta		
Chinese Wisteria	Wisteria sinensis		
Crimson Bottlebrush	Callistemon citrinus		Low
Crepe Myrtle	Logerstroemia indica		
Murraya	Murraya paniculata		
Star Jasmine	Trachelospermum jasminoides		
Oleander	Nerium oleander		
Loquat	Eriobotrya japonica		

Page 1 of 1

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GUIDELINES

Clear access to irrigation infrastructure

A significant amount of money is spent on channel maintenance each year. MI needs clear access to channels so we can carry out aquatic weed spraying, de-silting and regular maintenance to irrigation infrastructure.

How can I help reduce costs?

We are committed to delivering value to our customers. You can help us reduce costs by allowing clear access for vehicles by removing obstructive vegetation (trees or gardens), farm machinery, waste stockpiles and other obstacles:

- On MI's land
- Within five metres of the boundary between MI's land and your landholding, or
- Within ten metres of the edge of a channel bank, or
- In all other circumstances, within five metres of MI's works.

Why can't I plant close to a channel?

There are obvious safety aspects of having vegetation close to irrigation channels. If vegetation is within 10 metres of a channel, other problems may include:

- Tree roots can become invasive
- Tree branches may fall into the water and block structures downstream
- MI may need to remove obstacles to allow access for maintenance. You could be liable for the costs incurred so please work with us to ensure clear access.

Where do I get further information?

Further information is available on our website in the Development Rules and the Water Delivery Contract, or contact Customer Services on (02) 6962 0200.

This diagram of a high maintenance cost channel illustrates the problems encountered by MI maintenance staff. Channels with trees at least 10 metres away and no obstacles allow us clear access for maintenance.



Page 2 of 2