

Chilean flame creeper

Tropaeolum speciosum

Family

Tropaeolaceae (nasturtium)

Also known as

Flame flower

Where is it originally from?

South America

What does it look like?

Climbing perennial, often to high canopy, usually hairless with a thick rootstock and slender stems with curling tendrils (<7cm long) and watery sap. Dull, soft, light green leaves with five leaflets (10-35 x 5-16 mm). Solitary tubular scarlet flowers (15 mm diameter, Nov-April) with five irregular petals with the bottom three having a very slender claw (7-8 mm long) are followed by a thin, fleshy, deep blue seed capsule (1cm wide) made up of three round parts.

Are there any similar species?

Tropaeolum pentaphyllum has flowers with only two upper petals developed.

Why is it weedy?

Effectively dispersed, moderately long-lived and scrambling habit. Tolerates warm to cold temperatures, salt, wind, many soil types, and damp to dry conditions.

How does it spread?

Birds spread the seed.

What damage does it do?

Climbs to canopy, alters light levels of bush areas, and can prevent the establishment of native species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed forest and shrubland.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Physical removal - Hand pull or dig out entire plant - Ensure all plant material is removed from site to prevent regrowth and dispose of to a refuse transfer station.
2. Cut and paste - Cut the stem as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply either glyphosate gel (400g/l strength) or picloram gel (43g/L strength). Do not use picloram gel near desirable plants or over wetlands.
3. Foliar spray - (when in full leaf). Apply Glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient) herbicide at a rate of 20ml/L to cover entire plant. Note glyphosate herbicide is not selective and may damage the plant that the bomarea is growing over. To prevent off-target damage, pull the vine off the support plant and lay it on the ground and then spray. Note: Chilean flame creeper is controlled by Regional council and the Department of Conservation in some areas and may be subject to rules. For further information contact your local regional council. CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Extremely hard to kill. Rootstock and stems resprout. Follow up 6-monthly.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



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