

Orange firethorn

Pyracantha angustifolia

Family

Rosaceae (rose)

Also known as

Firethorn

Where is it originally from?

Asia

What does it look like?

Evergreen, spiny, spreading shrub (<3+m high) with dense, rigid, spreading stems that are grey and hairy when young, and shiny reddish brown when older, and usually tipped with a spine. Dark green oval to egg-shaped leaves (10-55 x 4-12 mm) are hairless above and hairy below and on hairy stalks. Many small white flowers in dense clusters (Dec-Jan) are followed by glossy orange berries (4-6 x 6-7 mm, Apr-Aug).

Are there any similar species?

Pyracantha crenatoserrata and *P. crenulata* are both occasionally weedy. *Crataegus* and *Cotoneaster* species are also similar.

Why is it weedy?

Forms dense thickets and produces many, well dispersed, moderately long-lived seeds. Tolerates hot to cold temperatures, wind, salt, damage, poor soils, damp to dry conditions and light shade.

How does it spread?

Birds spread the berries and seed.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense thickets that discourage native species from establishing.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed forest and shrubland, short tussockland, bare land, and occasionally coastal sites.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Physical removal - Pull or dig out entire plant then burn or dispose of at refuse transfer station.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply either glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or metsulfuron gel (10g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Foliar spray - Apply Metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient) (Knapsack 0.5g/L, or Gun and hose 20-35g/L) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts
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?

Cut stems resprout and seeds germinate in bare areas. Plan to clear whole areas to minimise reseeding by birds. Replant bared areas with dense groundcover or shrubs to minimise seedling germination and regrowth.



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Photo: Trevor James



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