Tree privet

Ligustrum lucidum

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Oleaceae

Also known as
Japanese privet, broadleaf privet

Where is it originally from?
Temperate and tropical regions, China

What does it look like?
Small-to-large evergreen, hairless tree or dense shrub (<15+ m) with distinctive lumpy warts on the stems. Dark green leaves (5-13 x 3-6 cm) are glossy on the top surface and arranged in opposite pairs on the stems. Tiny fragrant, creamy flowers make up flowerheads (25 x 20 cm, Nov-Mar) and are followed by bluish or purplish-black berry-like fruit (6 x 5 mm) coated with a powdery 'bloom'.



Photo: Trevor James

Are there any similar species?
Chinese Privet

Why is it weedy?
Produces many highly-viable seeds in widely-dispersed berries. Fast-growing, very long-lived (100+ years) and forms very dense, tall stands. Very tolerant of shade, frost, damage, grazing, all well-drained soil types, high to moderate temperatures, damp or drought conditions, salt and wind.



Photo: Trevor James

How does it spread?
Birds, vegetation dumping and soil movement all spread seeds. Common seed sources are roadsides, farm and urban hedges, gardens and wasteland.

What damage does it do?
Forms dense carpet of seedlings on forest floor, and grows through understorey to dominate and replace canopy trees in most forest types. Poisonous berries may possibly impact on native fauna, especially insects.



Photo: Trevor James

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Most coastal and lowland forest types (intact and disturbed), shrublands, fernland, cliffs, and coastline.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Pull or dig seedlings (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut and paste - 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), or gel/mixture of glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) OR metsulfuron (10g/l strength) to the entire cut stem. When a gel is inadequate apply a solution of diesel and triclopyr (20:1 diesel:triclopyr) or commercial formulations (120g triclopyr/l of oil, or product containing triclopyr and picloram 50ml/L water mix) can be used. Apply the mixture over the entire exposed surface of the cut stump, i.e. top and sides.
3. Basal spray - Basal spray stems up to 20cm diametre with X-Tree Basal. Apply from the ground to a height of 6 times the diameter of the plant, ensure the base is thoroughly covered at ground level.
4. Drill or frill - Drill downward sloping holes around the circumference of the trunk about 8-10 cm apart, or Frill (make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree, taking care not to ring-bark the plant). Fill the holes or saturate the cuts with metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (20-50g/L + penetrant) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted) .
5. Foliar spray - 3. Foliar spray - Apply herbicide using a hand held sprayer/knapsack to plants <1m tall or gun and hose

for larger infestations. Use the label recommended adjuvant.
Apply metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient at 5g/10L knapsack or 20g/100L gun and hose) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.
OR picloram/triclopyr herbicide (picloram 100g/l and triclopyr 300g/l active ingredient at 6ml/L) plus organosilicone penetrant (1ml/L) to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Triclopyr and picloram herbicides are 'grass friendly' but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants. Picloram has residual activity in the soil which may leach and kill other plants. Do not use under and around other (desirable) broadleaf plants.
NOTE: These herbicides are not for use over or near water bodies or wetlands
6. Biocontrol - For information about the privet lace bug please visit:
https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/managing-invasive-species/weed-biocontrol/projects-agents/biocontrol-agents/privet-lacebug
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?
Untreated stumps resprout. Reseeds profusely in bared areas. Follow up 6-monthly, easiest to spot during spring flowering. Don't replant until seedling regrowth ceases, as privet will grow through groundcover.