# Cathedral bells

*Cobaea scandens*

www.weedbusters.org.nz

**Family**
Cobaeaceae (cobaea)

**Also known as**
Cup and saucer vine

**Where is it originally from?**
Central and South America

Photo: Trevor James

**What does it look like?**
Evergreen, climbing vine (<6 m), with angled stems with hooklike tips. Leaves are arranged alternately on stems, and are made up of 3 pairs of oval leaflets (including small basal pair) that are dark green above, whitish below, with branched tendrils that are purplish when young and woody at the base. Midrib has twining tendrils. Bell-shaped flowers (6-7 cm long, Dec-May) that are green and smelly when young and become deep purple develop into green seed capsules (55-85 mm long) containing winged seeds (10-15 mm).

**Why is it weedy?**
Seeds are moderately to well-dispersed, moderate growth rate, scrambles over most species, grows to canopy, and forms dense, long-lived masses. Moderately tolerant of shade, drought or damp, wind, salt, differing soil types, and damage.

Photo: Trevor James

**How does it spread?**
Seed is carried a short distance by wind, but most spread is through dumped vegetation, soil movement or scrambling habit. Gardens are a common source.

**What damage does it do?**
Smothers all plants up to medium to high canopy, preventing the establishment of native plant seedlings.

**Which habitats is it likely to invade?**
Open and intact forest and forest margins, coastline, and shrublands, especially in low-frost areas.

Photo: Trevor James

**What can I do to get rid of it?**
1. Physical removal - Hand pull small plants and single vines: trace the vines back to the roots and then dig these out. Ensure no vines are trailing on the ground as these will take root. Dispose of any plant material at a refuse transfer station or bury deeply.
2. Cut and paste - Cut the stem as close to the ground as possible and treat rooted ends liberally as soon as possible after cutting. Ensure the cut stem is not left trailing on the ground as these will take root. Apply picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem. When a gel is inadequate apply a solution of triclopyr and picloram (50ml/L triclopyr + picloram product/ water mix) can be used. Apply the mixture over the entire exposed surface of the stem, i.e. top and sides. Do not use picloram under desirable plants or overwater or wetlands.
3. Foliar spray - Apply triclopyr herbicide (600g/L active ingredient) at 6ml/L plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) OR Apply Picloram/triclopyr herbicide (picloram 100g/l and triclopyr 300g/l active ingredient) at 6ml/L plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) to thoroughly wet all parts of plant.Note: Overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants. Do not spray vines growing up the trunks of other desirable trees. Picloram has residual activity in the soil which can leach through soil and kill other plants. Do not use under and around other (desirable) trees and broadleaf plants. Do not use over water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label.
Note: Cathedral bells is controlled by Regional council 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?**
Stumps resprout very quickly. Dispose of cut fragments on ground and leave other parts to die in air. Follow up 6-monthly on seedlings.