Artillery plant

Lamium galeobdolon

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Lamiaceae (mint)

Also known as
Galeobdolon luteum, aluminium plant, yellow archangel, *Lamium maculatum*, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*

Where is it originally from?
Europe and West Asia

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Vigorous, perennial, mat-forming groundcover, with square, purplish stems and stolons that are densely hairy. Pleasant smelling, mint-like oval leaves (30-80 x 25-60 mm) are hairy below with large, pale, silvery-grey patches on upper surface, coarsely serrated along the edges, and arranged alternately on the stems. It is often found in gardens growing in the cooler areas around trees and shrubs. Tubular, hairy, lemon-yellow flowers (20-25 mm long) are produced (Dec-May) in dense whorls where leaf stems join main stems, but no seed is set. Plants seldom revert to plain green-leaved form.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Like tradescantia (wandering jew or wandering willy), aluminium plant rapidly covers large areas of ground with a thick mat that stops seedlings of other plants from establishing. It is shade tolerant, so can be a problem deep into bush areas, as well as on the margins. Stems take root wherever they touch the ground, and it also spreads from stem fragments dumped with garden waste.

How does it spread?
Stolon fragments are spread by soil movement, intentional planting, and greenwaste dumping. Sources include gardens, tips, roadsides, and wasteland.

What damage does it do?
Forms dense groundcover and prevents seedlings of native species establishing.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Disturbed bush, shrubland, fernland and margins of waterbodies throughout New Zealand.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Dig out small patches (all year round): dispose of at refuse transfer station, burn or bury.
2. Foliar spray (all year around) - Apply herbicide using a hand held sprayer/knapsack. Apply metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient at 0.5g/L) + organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L). Follow up every three months until eradication is achieved.
Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts. Do not spray within the rootzone of desirable plants.
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?
Follow up required 3-monthly until eradication achieved. No seedlings are produced, so eradication is possible.