Mickey Mouse plant

Ochna serrulata

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Ochnaceae (ochna)

Also known as
Mickey mouse bush, bird's eye bush

Where is it originally from?
Southern Africa

What does it look like?
Erect, evergreen shrub (<2 m tall) with slightly rough stems finely spotted with light brown. Spirally arranged, narrow and oblong leaves (<5 cm long) with a wavy surface and have finely toothed edges are pinkish-bronze when young, and mature to glossy green. Five-petalled, fragrant yellow flowers appear in spring (3 cm diameter) which drop off as the berry-like, spherical glossy green fruit develops attached to each of five red sepals. Fruit ripens from green to black (Nov-Jan), with each fruit containing one oval green seed.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Competes with native plants for space, sunlight, water and nutrients, and produces abundant fruit.

How does it spread?
Seeds are spread by birds.

What damage does it do?
Colonises areas quickly and develops dense shrub cover that shades out small native plants.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Forests, shrubland and riparian vegetation in warmer coastal districts.

What can I do to get rid of it?
Contact your regional council to determine the status of this species and responsibility for control.
1. Physical removal - dig out small plants or excavate larger areas. Can be left on site to rot down.
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 metsulfuron gel (10g/l strength)
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. Do not use over or near water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label.
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.

Photo: Trevor James

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Seed viability is relatively short (up to 1 year).