Flowering currant

Ribes sanguineum

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Grossulariaceae (gooseberry)

Also known as
Red flowering currant, blood currant, winter currant and pink-flowering currant

Where is it originally from?
Western North America

What does it look like?
Deciduous shrub (<1-2 m high) with broad, hairy, veined leaves (2-7cm long) divided into 3-8 lobes. Groups of 5-30 red or pink flowers (5-10mm diameter) are produced in early spring, and followed by oval, dark purple berries (1cm long).

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Forms dense stands along waterways and in shrublands, crowding out native species. Sprouts from root crowns, and stems can also take root when they touch the ground, forming new plants. Heavy seed crops occur every second or third year and 45kg of berries will yield about 1.8kg of seed (approx 500,000 seeds) that is spread by birds and small mammals.

Photo: Trevor James

How does it spread?
Pioneer species that sprouts from seed or root crown, especially after fire. Can also spread by layering when stems touch the ground, form roots, and develop into new plants.

What damage does it do?
Outcompetes native species in shrubland and along waterways.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Open bush areas, forest gaps, dry rocky slopes and disturbed sites from sea level up to just under 2000m. Prefers sun or partial shade.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Pull seedlings or dig out larger plants. 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)
3. Basal spray - 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. Foliar spray- Apply Glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient) herbicide (20ml/L) plus organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L) to cover entire plant
Note: Non selective. Avoid overspray onto 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.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis