African club moss

Selaginella kraussiana

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Selaginellaceae (club moss)

Also known as
Selaginella

Where is it originally from?
Southern and tropical Africa

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Small, carpet-forming, fern ally groundcover with long, fine roots and creeping, slender, irregularly branched stems that root at nodes. Leaves (2-4 mm) are in rows. Spore cones (10 mm long) are rounded.

Are there any similar species?
Superficially similar to many native moss and leafy liverworts.

Why is it weedy?
Disperses widely and quickly, and grows on ground or on the trunks of other plants. Tolerates hot or cold, and light to deep shade, but requires reasonably damp to wet substrate.

Photo: Trevor James

How does it spread?
Spores and stem fragments are spread on boots, by livestock, water movement and dumped vegetation and in contaminated soil. Tracks, streams, contaminated plants and potting mix in nurseries and shops, and gardens are all sources of new infestations.

What damage does it do?
Invades forest floor, inhibiting the establishment of native plant seedings, leading to higher light levels and succession by more aggressive weeds, especially vines, a classic example of a small impact leading to a catastrophic outcome.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Disturbed forest and shrubland, streamsides, and fernland.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Dig out small areas. Dispose of at a refuse transfer station, burn or bury deeply.
2. Foliar spray - Apply herbicide using a hand held sprayer/knapsack. Apply Glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient) herbicide (20ml/L) plus organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L) to cover entire plant
OR metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (3g) + glyphosate (100ml) + organosilicone penetrant (2ml/L). Note: Overspray will kill other (desirable) plants. Do not apply near water bodies or wetlands
Follow up 3-monthly until site clear (possibly 4 times)
3. Biocontrol - For information regarding African club moss biocontrol agents, please visit:
https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/managing-invasive-species/weed-biocontrol/projects-agents/biocontrol-projects/african-club-moss
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?
Tiny fragments persist that are difficult to find. Clear and maintain from tracks, especially at their ends, to prevent movement further into the bush area. Peg sites out to facilitate identification when following up, and check 3-monthly for regrowth.