Nasturtium

Tropaeolum majus

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Tropaeolaceae (nasturtium)

Also known as
Garden nasturtium

Where is it originally from?
Europe, America, Africa, Asia

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Scrambling or trailing, hairless, aromatic, annual or short-lived perennial, occasionally climbing to 2 m high, with succulent stems (to 10 m long) and watery sap. Distinctive, roundish shield-shaped leaves (18-21 cm diameter) are often slightly asymmetric, bluish underneath and with a long stalk attached to the back of the leaf. Solitary or clustered tubular scarlet orange or yellow flowers (4 cm diameter, Oct-May) with 5 irregular petals are followed by succulent, green, 3-sided seed capsules (10-14 mm long) with caper-like seeds.

Why is it weedy?
Quick maturing, produces many viable seeds, smothering habit and rapid growth. Tolerates salt, wind, hot to cold, semi-shade, damp, damage, and poor soil.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

How does it spread?
Soil movement, dumped vegetation, scrambling stems and possibly birds and browsing mammals. Common sources include roadsides, tips, gardens.

What damage does it do?
Smothers low-growing habitats and prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Disturbed sites especially adjacent to gardens and dumps, Shrubland, herbfield, wetland, and streamsides.

Photo: Trevor James

What can I do to get rid of it?
Easy to control.
1. Physical removal - Hand-pull or dig up entire plant. Dispose of plant material to landfill or refuse centre.
2. Foliar spray - Apply glyphosate (360 g/L active ingredient at 100ml/10L knapsack, 1L/100L gun and hose) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L), to cover entire plant. Note: Glyphosate overspray will kill other (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?
Succulent stems and capsules resprout readily. Check for resprouting stems, follow up 6 monthly. Replant sites densely to lower the light levels.