Blue spur flower

Coleus barbatus Var. *grandis*

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Lamiaceae (mint)

Also known as
Plectranthus grandis

Where is it originally from?
East and South Africa

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Soft-wooded, strong-smelling upright shrub (<2-3 m tall). Large, downy, soft, broad (6-20 x 4-13 cm), oval leaves with coarsely toothed edges and rounded tips with small sticky glands on underside. Tubular deep blue flowers (20-25 mm long) in whorls of 4-10 (Jan-Dec), on erect purplish stems (20-50 cm tall), are followed by tiny brown nutlets (May).

Are there any similar species?
Plectranthus ecklonii has purplish-blue flowers, is less woolly. *P. barbatus*.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Tolerates semi-shade, damp, and high to moderate temperatures, but is frost tender. Moderately long-lived.

How does it spread?
Produces few seeds, spreading mainly by stem fragments through soil movement and dumping of garden waste.

What damage does it do?
Forms dense stands, stopping native plants from establishing. Shades out smaller native plants and scrambles over other plants. Dense growth can restrict access to bush areas.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Heavily disturbed bush and shrubland, and bush margins, especially in northern areas.

Photo: Trevor James

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - Hand pull small plants, or dig out entire plant including roots (all year round): Dispose of at a refuse transfer station, burn, or bury deeply.
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) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Basal spray stems up to 20cm diametre with X-Tree Basal. 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.
OR Apply Metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient) (Knapsack 0.5g/L, or Gun and hose 20-35g/100L) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.
OR Apply Triclopyr herbicide (600g/L active ingredient) at 6ml/L plus penetrant 1ml/L to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Tricolopyr herbicide is 'grass friendly' but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf 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?
Easy to control. Follow up within 3-6 months to kill resprouted stems. Replant bare sites.