Coastal banksia

Banksia integrifolia

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Proteaceae (protea)

Where is it originally from?
Australia

What does it look like?
Erect, fast-growing, evergreen tree (<8 m tall). Long, narrow leaves (<15 cm long by 2.5cm wide) with dark green upper surfaces and silvery and felted undersides are grouped in whorls of 3-5. Margins of the leaves of seedlings and saplings are coarsely toothed, while adult leaves have entire margins. Erect cylindrical pale yellow to yellow spikes (9-12 cm long) appear from March to August, made up of several hundred flowers (10-15mm long) that are densely packed in a spiral around a woody axis, and produce large amounts of nectar. These develop into hard fruiting cones covered with woody valves, each containing a single black seed. In warm dry weather the valves open and release seeds. Fruiting cones may stay on the tree a long time after seeding.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

Are there any similar species?
White flowering bottlebrushes can look similar

Why is it weedy?
Tolerant of a wide range of habitats and conditions, including salty soils and estuaries. Drought and frost tolerant, preferring sunny, dry areas with poor soils. Fast-growing, rapidly maturing and producing a lot of seeds that are released as soon as they ripen in late summer.

How does it spread?
Spreads locally by seed fall and wind dispersal up to at least 300m from seeding trees.

Photo: Carolyn Lewis

What damage does it do?
Forms dense thickets that crowd out native plants.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Preferred habitat is within 50km of the coast, ranging from coastal dunes to sub alpine tussock grasslands. Threatens well-drained sites especially sand dunes.

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). Leave 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 either glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or metsulfuron gel (10g/l strength) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Drill or frill - Drill downward sloping holes around the circumference of the trunk about 8-10 cm apart, or Frill (make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree, taking care not to ring-bark the plant). Fill the holes with undiluted 'neat' glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient) or saturate the frill cuts with glyphosate (360g/L active ingredient) mixed at 250ml/L
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?
Check site regularly for seedlings and remove.

Photo: Trevor James