Alder

Alnus glutinosa

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family
Betulaceae (birch)

Also known as
European alder, black alder

Where is it originally from?
Eurasia, North Africa

Photo: Trevor James

What does it look like?
Deciduous tree (<15 m high), with dark brown, fissured bark, often with two or three main trunks growing together. Purple or grey leaf buds turn into leathery, oblong toothed leaves (5-10 cm), with raised veins on the underside and rounded tips. Young leaves and buds are sticky with a resinous gum. Both male and female flowers appear on the same tree before leaves emerge. Narrow yellow male catkins (2-6 cm long) made up of many flowers dangle from branches, while small, round, green female catkins are grouped (3-8) on each stalk. Female catkins, once pollinated by male catkins via wind, develop into woody green cones (1-2cm long) that ripen to brown before releasing small (3mm), flat, waxy seeds (nutlets) that float on water.

Photo: Trevor James

Why is it weedy?
Fruits prolifically, and forms thickets by suckering, forming dense stands in wet areas.

How does it spread?
Wind, gravity and water. Suckers from the main plant.

What damage does it do?
Invades wet natural areas, forming dense stands and crowding out other species.

Photo: Trevor James

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Moist or waterlogged sites and along rivers.

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) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Drill - 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)
4. Foliar spray (Seedlings only) - 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.