

Chilean flame creeper

Tropaeolum speciosum

Family

Tropaeolaceae (nasturtium)

Where is it originally from?

South America

What does it look like?

Climbing perennial, often to high canopy, usually hairless with a thick rootstock and slender stems with curling tendrils (<7cm long) and watery sap. Dull, soft, light green leaves with five leaflets (10-35 x 5-16 mm). Solitary tubular scarlet flowers (15 mm diameter, Nov-April) with five irregular petals with the bottom three having a very slender claw (7-8 mm long) are followed by a thin, fleshy, deep blue seed capsule (1cm wide) made up of three round parts.

Are there any similar species?

Tropaeolum pentaphyllum has flowers with only two upper petals developed.

Why is it weedy?

Effectively dispersed, moderately long-lived and scrambling habit. Tolerates warm to cold temperatures, salt, wind, many soil types, and damp to dry conditions.

How does it spread?

Birds spread the seed.

What damage does it do?

Climbs to canopy, alters light levels of bush areas, and can prevent the establishment of native species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed forest and shrubland.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Pull up all vegetation (all year round): Dispose of at a refuse transfer station. No fully effective herbicide treatment is known, however the following could be tried:
2. Stump swab (all year round): glyphosate (500ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (250ml/L).
3. Spray (spring-summer): glyphosate (200ml/10L + penetrant).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Extremely hard to kill. Rootstock and stems resprout. Follow up 6-monthly.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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