False acacia
Robinia pseudoacacia

Family
Fabaceae (pea)

Also known as
Robinia pseudacacia, black locust, R. pseudoacacia var. rectissima

Where is it originally from?
South Eastern USA

What does it look like?
Deciduous tree (<25 m tall). Young saplings have smooth, green bark, while older trees have deep, furrowed, shaggy, dark bark with flat-topped ridges. Leaves (20-30 cm) are made up of 7-21 thin, round leaflets that are dark green above and pale underneath, and attached in pairs along the leaf stalk. Smaller branches have 1 cm long spines at the base of each leaf stalk. Large, drooping clusters of pea-like, fragrant, white to yellow flowers (1 cm long, Nov-Jan) are followed by shiny, smooth, narrow, flat seed pods (5-10cm long) containing 4 to 8 seeds.

Are there any similar species?
Sophora (kowhai) species can look similar but don't have spines. Gleditsia (honey locust, water locust) species have often twisted seed pods, have thorns on the trunk and narrow leaflets.

Why is it weedy?
Reproduces vigorously by root suckering and stump sprouting to form groves of trees interconnected by a common root system, and also seeds heavily every 1-2 years, with lesser amounts of seed produced in intervening years. The large, fragrant flowers also compete with native plants for pollinating bees.

How does it spread?
Seeds and also by suckering.

What damage does it do?
Dense thickets shade out other plants in open or disturbed sites. The large, fragrant flowers compete with native plants for pollinating bees.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Prefers full sun and well drained soils and invades dry and sandy sites, ex-pasture, disturbed forest, disturbed shrubland, forest edges, plantation forest and roadsides.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Seedlings can be pulled out, however it is often difficult to tell a seedling from a new sucker (which cannot be pulled or dug out).
2. Foliar spray suckering growth and saplings 4 m tall or less. Apply glyphosate 5%, picloram or triclopyr at label rates on a 'spray-to-glisten' rather than a 'spray-to-wet' basis. Spring to early autumn.
3. Basal bark spray trees with triclopyr 20-30% (check label rate) in basal bark oil, diesel, kerosene or fuel oil (check herbicide label). Apply to wet the complete circumference of the lower 30-45 cm of the trunk to the soil level. Avoid runoff. Spring to early autumn. Can cut down trees only after death.
4. Cut notches on downward angles around the trunk, one cut per 10 cm diameter, squirt with 1 ml of concentrated glyphosate or triclopyr (use label rate). Ensure horizontal gaps between cuts so herbicide can be carried to the roots via the phloem.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Monitor the site and treat any regrowth or seedlings. Plant a dense cover of native trees or shrubs to produce shade. If possible, track down and remove the seed source.