

Brush cherry

Syzygium australe

Family

Myrtaceae (myrtle)

Also known as

Purple monkey apple, *Eugenia myrtifolia*, *Eugenia paniculata* (misnamed)

Where is it originally from?

Australia

What does it look like?

Large shrub or small tree (<10 m high) with smooth, light grey bark and angular, usually hanging branchlets. Leathery, glossy, oval leaves (4-10 x 1-4 cm) are aromatic when crushed and have numerous, conspicuous, parallel veins. Clusters of 3-25 whitish flowers with red bases (Jan-July) are followed by bunches of oblong-oval crimson-purple berry-like fruit (10-20 x 7-15 mm) each containing a large seed.

Are there any similar species?

Acmena smithii has white or pink-mauve fruit. *S. paniculatum* is also similar.

Why is it weedy?

Long-lived with well-dispersed seeds. Prefers moderate to highly fertile, well-drained soils, but tolerates frost, salt, dry, wind, shade, and damage. Grows faster than native hardwoods.

How does it spread?

Birds and soil movement spread the seeds. Common seed sources are hedges, shelterbelts, gardens, and roadsides.

What damage does it do?

Seedlings remain in shade, and grow tall into any canopy gap caused by windfall or damage to other trees to become long-lived canopy species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed forests, shrublands and margins.

What can I do to get rid of it?

Maintain rolling front of control.

1. Pull or dig seedlings (all year round): Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut and squirt or bore and fill (all year round): Make 1 cut or bore 1 hole every 100mm around the trunk and apply 2g metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (slurry) to each cut or hole.
3. Cut down and paint stump (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L).
4. Spray (spring-autumn): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Reseeds in bared areas. Cut stumps resprout. Follow up at least 6-monthly to control seedlings. Replant densely (use pigeon-friendly species) where possible to minimise seedling growth.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



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