

# Chilean flame creeper

*Tropaeolum speciosum*

## Family

Tropaeolaceae (nasturtium)

## Also known as

Flame flower

## 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](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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