

Coral tree

Erythrina x sykesii

Family

Fabaceae (pea)

Also known as

Flame tree

What does it look like?

Large, spreading, deciduous tree (<12-18 m tall). Trunks have light coloured bark, and scattered, tapering spines (5-10 mm long). Round twigs with prickles and long, bright green, broad-oval to heart-shaped leaves (10-20 cm long) both start out hairy, then become smooth as they mature. Large dark orange pea-like flowers (50-60 mm long) cluster on branch tips (Aug-Oct), but no seed pods are formed.

Are there any similar species?

Another coral tree (*Erythrina crista-galli*) with dark red flowers and narrow-oval leaves (6-12 cm long) is commonly cultivated.

Why is it weedy?

Sterile hybrid so sets no seed, but all stems root upon contact with ground, forming dense stands. Grows rapidly, lives a long time and replaces canopy trees. Possibly allelopathic. Tolerates a wide range of conditions ? hot to warm, wet to dry, fertile to very poor soils, and little shade.

How does it spread?

Stem fragments dropped or planted from gardens, roadsides, and greenwaste dumping.

What damage does it do?

Forms tall, spreading canopy, preventing native plants from establishing. Leaf litter and fallen branches under it stop other plants growing.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Coastal areas, wetlands, bush and shrub margins, open sites in low-frost areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Bore and fill (all year round): Make 1 hole every 150 mm around the trunk and fill or saturate each hole with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (3g mixed with water) or 20ml of a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted).
2. Cut and squirt (all year round): Make 1 cut every 100mm around the trunk and fill or saturate each cut with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (2g mixed with water) or 15ml of a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted).
3. Frilling (all year round): Ensure complete frill achieved and paint frills thoroughly with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g /L + penetrant) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (200ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Always treat standing plants, do not cut down as all stems root profusely. All treatments best in late summer-autumn.



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Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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