

Loquat

Eriobotrya japonica

Family

Rosaceae (rose)

Where is it originally from?

China, Japan

What does it look like?

Evergreen tree (<8 m tall) with erect trunk and main branches, and spreading secondary branches. Young stems are stout and covered in a white down, while older stems have leaf scars and become grey-brown and calloused. Narrow ovalish, leathery leaves (15-35 x 7-10 cm) are clustered near branch tips and have a wrinkled surface that is dark green and glossy above, and thinly hairy below. Young leaves are totally brown and hairy. White or ivory 5-petalled flowers (8 x 4 mm, Apr-Aug) are followed by pear-shaped to roundish fruit (<50 x 35 mm, Oct-Dec) with yellow skin covered in downy hair. Seeds are large and brown.

Why is it weedy?

Produces many well dispersed, highly viable seeds, and grows rapidly. Tolerates wet to dry conditions, hot to moderately cool temperatures, most soils, and moderate shade.

How does it spread?

Spread by birds, especially kereru, and humans, and in dumped vegetation. Gardens, wastelands, and exotic plantations are common seed sources.

What damage does it do?

Forms tall stands, replaces native low canopy and mid-tier species.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed forest and shrubland, and inshore islands, mainly in northern North Island.

What can I do to get rid of it?

Easy to kill.

1. Hand pull or dig small seedlings (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Ringbark large trees (all year round), leave to die standing.
3. Cut down big plants close to ground (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
4. Cut and squirt (all year round): make 1 cut per 100 mm around trunk diameter, apply 1g metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg per cut.
5. Spray (spring-summer): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Cut stumps rarely resprout. Reseeds in bared areas. Plan for considerable seedling growth after control, dense planting can prevent this. Remove from gardens near to valuable habitats.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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