

# Red cestrum

## *Cestrum elegans* and *Cestrum fasciculatum*

### Family

Solanaceae (nightshade)

### Also known as

*Cestrum purpureum*, *Cestrum newellii*

### Where is it originally from?

Chile and Peru

### What does it look like?

Smelly shrub (<2-4 m) with erect stems that are densely covered with purplish hairs when young and become woody as plant matures. Hairy leaves (40-150 x 15-75 mm) are foul-smelling when bruised and are arranged alternately on the stems. *C. elegans* has dense clusters of tubular magenta to deep crimson scentless flowers (15-25 mm long) with petal margins bent backwards (Jan-Dec). Flowers on *C. fasciculatum* are scarlet (Aug-Mar). When produced, berries (7-15mm diameter) are crimson to dark red.

### Are there any similar species?

*Cestrum aurantiacum*, *C. nocturnum* and *C. parqui* are all similar as are many native shrub species, eg. mahoe.

### Why is it weedy?

Produces many long-lived and widely dispersed seeds and forms dense, shady masses. Moderate to highly shade tolerant, and grows in most soil types, damp or dry conditions, and hot or cold temperatures. Poisonous, not grazed.

### How does it spread?

Birds, flooding, soil movement and vegetation dumping all spread seeds.

### What damage does it do?

Forms dense (occasionally pure) stands in forest understorey and shrubland. Prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings. Poisonous berries and rotting vegetation may affect native fauna.

### Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed and open forest and margins, streamsides, shrublands, and dry gullies.

### What can I do to get rid of it?

Hard to distinguish from many native species (apart from foul smell), best controlled when in flower. Wear gloves when handling.

1. Pull out small plants (all year round), leave on site to rot down.
2. Stump swab (all year round): a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L).
3. Spray (spring-summer): triclopyr 600 EC (30ml/10L).

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

### What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stems resprout. Reseeds into bared areas. Exclude stock at all times. Replant bared sites to minimise regrowth. Check for seedlings 6 monthly.



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



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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