

Tradescantia

Tradescantia fluminensis

Family

Commelinaceae (commelina)

Also known as

Wandering willie

Where is it originally from?

South America

What does it look like?

Trailing, soft, hairless, perennial groundcover with succulent, soft, creeping stems that root at all nodes touching the ground. Dark green, shiny, smooth and slightly fleshy leaves (3-6 cm long) are oval with pointed tips. White flowers (2 cm diameter, Dec-Jan) are 3-petaled and in small clusters. No fruit or seed is produced in New Zealand. Variegated and purple-backed leaf cultivars are common and revert readily to the green form.

Are there any similar species?

Zebrina species and *Commelina* species are similar.

Why is it weedy?

Creeping, mat-forming habit and rapid establishment from fragments. Very tolerant of dense shade, severe damage and grazing, wet, most soil types and high to low temperature, but not frost and drought.

How does it spread?

Stem fragments spread by water movement, livestock, dumped vegetation, soil movement, boots and mowers.

What damage does it do?

Smothers ground in light to deep shade, preventing the seedlings of native species from establishing. Causes habitats to open and be invaded by exotic shrubs and vines. Mats growing on riverbanks can break away with water flow and contribute to flooding. Causes severe dermatitis in dogs and other animals.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Most damp shaded habitats, especially disturbed and previously grazed forest, shrubland, streamsides, river systems, alluvial terraces, fernland, wetlands, and anywhere downstream or adjacent to existing infestations.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Rake and roll up (usually small spots only, to minimise initial spray). Best in drought period. Work catchments from top to bottom and towards centre. Dispose of at a refuse transfer station, burn or bury. All fragments must be contained and removed from site as dropped fragments easily spread infestation. Usually spray follow up is required.
2. Foliar spray application: Apply triclopyr herbicide (600g/L active ingredient) at a rate of 6ml/L plus 2.5ml/L organosilicone wetter, such as Pulse Penetrant, to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Triclopyr is 'grass friendly' but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants. Do not use over water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label. Follow up quickly (2-3 months) before plant recovers. 2-3 treatments needed for total control.

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?

All remaining stem fragments resprout. Exclude livestock at all times. Maintain strict weed hygiene regime. Do not replant until site clear.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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