

# 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-petalled 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?

Work down catchment from top and sides.

1. Rake and roll up (usually small spots only, to minimise initial spray). Best in drought period. Work towards centre. Dispose of at a refuse transfer station, burn or bury. Usually spray follow up. Major disposal problem, dropped fragments can spread infestation.
2. Spray: triclopyr 600 EC (6ml/L + penetrant) or triclopyr 120g/L (30ml/L + penetrant) or triclopyr 300 EC (12ml/L). 90+% kill. Follow up quickly (2-3 months) before plant recovers. 2-3 treatments needed for total control.
3. Spray: glyphosate (20ml/L + penetrant) or triclopyr 600 EC (3ml/L + penetrant) or triclopyr 120g/L (15ml/L + penetrant). Follow up quickly (2-3 months) before plant recovers. 2-3 treatments needed for 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



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Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

replant until site clear.