

Woolly nightshade

Solanum mauritianum

Family

Solanaceae (nightshade)

Also known as

Tobacco weed, flannel-leaf, kerosene plant, *Solanum auriculatum*

Where is it originally from?

America

What does it look like?

Spreading, capsicum-smelling shrub or small tree (<10 m tall) with all parts covered in dusty hairs, and whitish, branching, soft-woody stems. Velvety, oval, grey green leaves (10-35 x 3-15 cm) are whitish underneath with prominent 'ears' (25mm) at base which clasp the stem. Dense clusters of mauve to purple flowers (15-20 mm diameter, Jan-Dec) with yellow anthers are followed by clusters of round berries (1 cm diameter) that ripen from hard green to soft, dull yellow.

Are there any similar species?

Solanum marginatum has spiny leaves and stems. *Brugmansia* species have similar leaves but giant hanging white (occasionally mauve, red, orange) flowers with a sweet scent.

Why is it weedy?

Grows and matures rapidly, forming dense tall stands and producing many well-dispersed seeds most of year. Allelopathic (produces toxins that poison the soil), inhibits regeneration. Tolerates wet to dry conditions, salt, all well-drained soils, hot to cool temperatures, semi-shade, damage and grazing.

How does it spread?

Birds, especially native pigeon, spread the seeds. Common seed sources are gullies, roadsides, neglected farms, waste land.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense, often pure stands. Inhibits or prevents establishment of native plant seedlings, and slows regeneration rate of native forests.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Heavily disturbed forest and light gaps, shrublands, coastal and estuarine margins, inshore islands, consolidated sand dunes, wetlands, some tussocklands, well-drained low-frost areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Pull up all small plants (easiest in winter). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut and squirt (all year round): make cuts at regular intervals around the trunk, apply 1.5ml of a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted) per cut.
3. Cut and paint stumps (all year round): a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or picloram gel.
4. Frilling (all year round): a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 600g/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 120g/L (200ml/L).
5. Injection method: use either 10 mm wide holes drilled at 45 degree angle down into trunk 50 mm deep spaced at 50 mm around trunk, or a series of 80 mm wide blazes cut to a depth of 15-20 mm, spaced at 20-40 mm. Fill each with picloram gel.
6. Spray: a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (25ml/10L) or triclopyr 600 EC (60ml/10L) or triclopyr 300 EC (12ml/L).

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.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

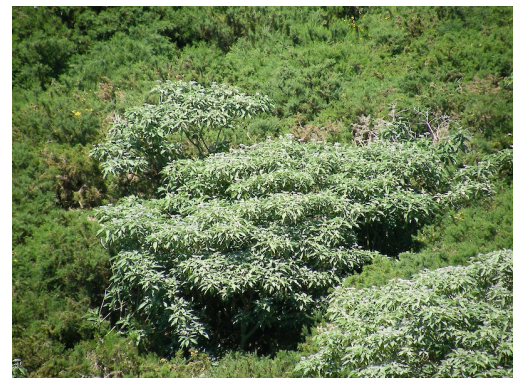


Photo: Carolyn Lewis

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Cut stems resprout quickly. Reseeds profusely in bared sites within 1-2 years.