

Woolly Nightshade

Solanum mauritianum



www.weedbusters.org.nz

Family

Solanaceae (nightshade) family

Also known as

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

Where is it originally from?

South America

What does it look like?

Spreading, capsicum-smelling shrub or small tree to 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) with yellow anthers appear from January to December, followed by clusters of round berries (1 cm diameter) that ripen from hard green to soft, dull yellow.

Are there any similar species?

White-edged nightshade (*Solanum marginatum*), has spiny leaves and stems. *Datura* or angels trumpet (*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, orchards, plantation forests, waste land, and shelter belts.

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, and places epiphytes would usually be found, especially in well-drained low-frost areas.

What can I do to get rid of it?

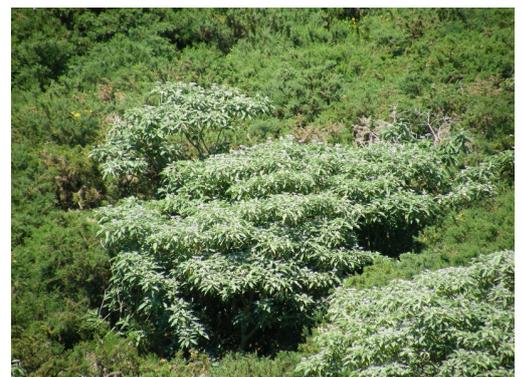
1. Pull up all small plants (easiest in winter). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut and squirt (all year round): make cuts at regular intervals around the trunk, apply undiluted Tordon Brushkiller (1.5ml per cut).
3. Cut and paint stumps (all year round): Tordon Brushkiller or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or Vigilant gel.
4. Frilling (all year round): Tordon Brushkiller (100ml /L) or triclopyr 600 g/L (100ml/L) or Yates Woody Weedkiller (200ml/L).
5. Injection method: use either 10 mm wide holes drilled at 45 degree angle down into trunk 50 mm deep spaced



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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 Vigilant gel.

6. Spray: Tordon Brushkiller (25ml/10L) or triclopyr 600 EC (60ml/10L) or triclopyr 300 EC (12ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Cut stems resprout quickly. Reseeds profusely in bared sites within 1-2 years. Rarely invades intact habitats. Maintain shade by planting dense cover. Usually short-lived seed, follow up three years. Maintain rolling front of control. Exclude livestock, maintain vertebrate pest control.