

Plectranthus

Plectranthus ciliatus

Plectranthus is a trailing, groundcover plant that spreads rapidly to invade native bush shading out seedlings and other low growing native species. It replaces them by preventing their establishment and growth, resulting in a change in the character of the bush.



Status

Plectranthus is no longer permitted to be sold, propagated, distributed or commercially displayed on the basis that it is now a Regional Surveillance Plant Pest within the Auckland Region. The objective is to prevent its further spread by humans. Land occupiers are encouraged to control infestations of this plant without legal obligation.

Origin

Plectranthus is native to eastern South Africa. It was introduced as an ornamental plant, popular as a groundcover species and often grown as a trailing pot plant. *Plectranthus* was first recorded in the wild in 1965. It is abundant throughout the North Island and has been found at Karamea in the South Island. Within the Auckland Region, it is commonly found in old garden sites.

Description

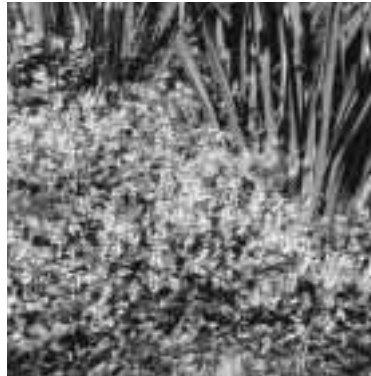
Plectranthus ciliatus is a groundcover plant with long straggling or trailing stems. The leaves are broad and oval shaped, and grow 5 to 12cm long and 3 to 7cm wide. They are green above and a glossy purple underneath and are

densely hairy, especially on the veins. The leaves are dotted with glands and have a strong pungent smell.

The flowers are white and borne in loose erect spikes about 30cm long. They are speckled with small purple spots on the inside of the petals and are 8-10mm long. The lower lip is slightly shorter than the upper and is boat-shaped. The flower spikes are produced from December to April and subsequently produce small nutlets about 1.5mm long and dark brown in colour.

Invasion

Plectranthus produces long vigorous runners and spreads rapidly to produce thick, dense mats in shady to semi-shady situations. The plant also produces seed but because they are not adapted for bird, wind or water dispersal, they are only a minor factor in its spread. Another cause of its spread in the Auckland Region comes from people dumping their garden rubbish in bush reserves, rather than at authorised refuse collection sites.



It is resistant to frost (if growing under trees), likes some shade and well-drained soils. It forms thick, dense mats along streamsides and through forest margins and disturbed or low forest.

Control

Plectranthus ciliatus may be controlled physically or by using herbicides.

Smaller patches may be pulled by hand or a rake may be used. After removing the plant material take it to an authorised refuse collection site. Do not compost Plectranthus, as stem fragments may regrow.

Infestations may also be controlled by spraying with:

- **Glyphosate** (Roundup G2 or Nufarm)
Knapsack100mls per 10 litres water + Pulse

Follow-up applications may be necessary.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide read the label thoroughly and ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

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