

# Blue Morning Glory

Blue Morning Glory is a highly invasive weed of bush areas and wasteland. It can grow as either a groundcover or clamber up trees. It can spread extremely vigorously, smothering and suppressing other plants. Distinctive for its bright purple flowers, until recently Blue Morning Glory has been sold as a garden ornamental.



## Status

Blue Morning Glory 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

Blue Morning Glory is found in many of the tropical parts of the world and is widespread throughout the tropical Pacific. It also grows well in subtropical and temperate areas as long as it is not exposed to frosts. In New Zealand it is found in lowland areas from North Auckland to Wellington and in the northern areas of the South Island.

## Description

Blue Morning Glory is a twining creeper that may grow as a groundcover or climber. The plant is often seen scrambling over the ground and growing up into trees and over hedges or fences. Hairy, twining stems emerge from a

fibrous root system and these stems often have a purple coloration. The leaves are heart-shaped, may have fine silky hairs below and are commonly three-lobed, up to 18 cm long by 16 cm wide. The lobes are broad and usually uneven in size. Flowers are produced year-round, in a sparse inflorescence (flowerhead), from the junction of the leaves and stems. The flowers are funnel shaped and appear on the end on long hairy stems. The central tube is pink with a narrow white base and the fused petals are purple with pink central bands on the back. The flowers are often very short lived, withering by mid-afternoon and turning completely pink. Although seed production is not generally known in New Zealand, a plant with seed was found in the Bay of Plenty in 1996. The seed capsules are brown and papery, approximately 2 cm across. The seeds are 3 - 4 mm in diameter, and similar in appearance to peppercorns.

### **Invasion**

Blue Morning Glory mainly spreads vegetatively, with most infestations developing where a gardener has dumped plant material that has taken root and grown or where plants have grown from one property to another and layered. As stated previously very little seed is produced, however at least one seeding plant has been identified in New Zealand with seedlings nearby. These seeds are mainly spread by water and to where they naturally fall from the plant.



Blue Morning Glory grows mainly in wastelands and forest margins and can withstand a range of conditions from tropical to warm temperate. It is quite susceptible to frosts but may be found growing in warmer lowland areas throughout the North Island and upper parts of the South Island. It prefers full sun but may grow in light shade under trees. It will grow well in wet or dry conditions.

### **Control**

Smaller infestations may be physically controlled by hand pulling the weeds and digging out the root systems. When physically removing the plant it is important to ensure that all plant material is removed and disposed of safely as it will readily regrow from stem fragments, etc. In the case of larger infestations, cut the stems where the plants grow up over trees, shrubs or fences and remove as much of the plant material as possible without damaging the underlying plants. Treat the cut stems that are still attached to the ground by painting with a brush or by soaking the stems for 10 to 15 minutes in one of the following mixtures;

# pestfacts



- Glyphosate (Roundup G2 or Nufarm) .....1 part per 4 parts of water
- Banvine.....1 part per 4 parts of water
- Yates Woody Weedkiller .....1 part per 4 parts of water
- Alternatively after cutting the vines away from desirable plants the plant material attached to the ground may be sprayed with one of the mixtures below. Where there is a dense infestation scrambling over wasteland or where damage to underlying plants is not a concern an overall spray can be also be applied to the plants. Spray the foliage, ensuring a good even coverage, with;
- Glyphosate (Roundup G2 or Nufarm)  
Knapsac .....100mls + 20mls Pulse per 10 litres of water
- Banvine  
Knapsack .....120mls per 10 litres of water
- Yates Woody Weedkiller  
Knapsack .....120mls per 10 litres of water

Follow-up will be required in all cases to ensure all regrowth is removed or sprayed.

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

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