

## Mysore thorn (*Caesalpinia decapetala*)



*Thick, hooked thorns cover the whole plant*



*Yellow pea-like flowers*

Mysore thorn is a spiny, deciduous, sprawling shrub of tropical origin that can grow up to 15 m high when supported by other vegetation and can form impenetrable thickets.

This shrub climbs with the help of short, thick, hooked thorns which cover the whole plant and give it its alternative common names of 'wait-a-bit' and 'whoa-back'. The leaves are divided into many feathery leaflets. The yellow pea-like flowers appear from June to November. The oblong, dark brown fruit pods contain marbled, slightly flattened seeds.

Rodents, birds, water movement and human actions disperse the seeds.

To control Mysore thorn, small plants should be dug out and disposed of carefully. The vine can be cut near its base and the cut stump treated with herbicide. Whole plants can be sprayed with herbicides.

**At present, Mysore thorn is only found on Raoul Island in the Kermadecs, where it is a serious problem. However, it could establish in mainland New Zealand, and the Regional Council should be immediately notified of any sightings.**