

Privet

Ligustrum lucidum (tree privet)

Ligustrum sinense (Chinese privet)

There are two predominant privet species in the Auckland Region. They are Chinese privet (small leaved), and tree privet (large leaved). Both privet species have escaped from their original garden plantings and have rapidly invaded other gardens, roadsides, bush margins, stream banks, etc. Privet often displaces native species in regenerating communities and if left undisturbed, may eventually dominate an area of forest, particularly so with tree privet.

Status

Chinese privet and tree privet are no longer permitted to be sold, propagated, distributed or commercially displayed as they are now declared a National Surveillance Plant Pest. The objective is to prevent further spread by human activities. Land occupiers are encouraged to control these plants growing on their land, but without legal obligation.

Origin

Both tree privet and Chinese privet are native to China. They were introduced to New Zealand as ornamental plants and widely grown as hedging. Tree privet was first recorded in the wild in 1958. It is now found in Northland through to the Waikato and coastal Bay of Plenty, and widespread throughout Auckland.



Tree Privet

Chinese privet was first recorded in the wild in 1950. It has now naturalised from the Bay of Plenty to Northland and is widespread throughout the Auckland Region.

Description

Tree privet

Tree privet is a medium sized evergreen tree, that can grow to about 10 metres. It has dark green, glossy leaves that have a paler green undersurface.

Tree privet flowers from January to March, producing large clusters of strongly scented, tiny cream flowers, which attract pollinating insects. The fruits ripen into bunches of small purplish-black berries. Leaves and fruit of tree privet are considered poisonous to stock and humans.

Chinese privet

Chinese privet is a small evergreen tree, that grows up to 5 metres. Its leaves are small and a dull green colour. Chinese privet flowers from September to December, producing strongly scented tiny white flowers which attract pollinating insects. The fruits ripen into bunches of small, dull, purplish-black berries. These fruits along with the leaves of Chinese privet are considered poisonous to stock and humans.



Chinese Privet



Berries

Invasion

Privet is spread in two main ways. Seed is spread when birds eating the fruit, distribute the seeds in their droppings. Deliberate plantings by humans cause new infestations to occur. Privet is tolerant of shade, drought, heat, cold, wet or dry. In the wild you can find it growing in lowland and coastal forest, forest remnants, shrubland, roadsides, farm hedgerows and on wasteland.

Control

Seedling privet plants should be dug out with roots attached for composting, just pulling usually leaves the root behind to regrow again. All other control methods require the addition of a suitable herbicide to prevent regrowth.

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Overall Spraying

Handgun application:

- Escort35gms Escort + 100mls pulse per 100 litres water

Knapsack application:

- Escort5gms Escort + 10mls pulse per 10 litres water
- Roundup200mls Roundup + 10mls pulse per 10 litres water
(suitable for shrubs less than 2 metres high)

Cut Stump Treatment

Cut the tree off less than 15cm above the ground and liberally apply (with paint brush, swab or spray bottle) a suitable herbicide mixture to the stump and all bark to ground level within 15 minutes of cutting. This is because the herbicide only travels 15cm downwards within the trunk and the sapwood cells seal up after 15 minutes exposure to air.

Suitable herbicide mixtures for cut stump treatment are:

- Escort5 gms + 10 ml pulse per 1 litre water
- Roundup1 part to 4 parts water + pulse.
- Tordon Brush Killer1 part to 12 parts water
- Banvine1 part to 20 parts water
- 24D1 part to 20 parts water
- Grazon1 part to 20 parts water
- Renovate1 part to 10 parts water

Use a plastic container for mixing and apply mixture liberally with a clean paint brush or swab with small rag tied to end of stick or small spray bottle. Wear waterproof gloves and dispose of empty containers appropriately.

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

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