

# OLD MAN'S BEARD

*Clematis vitalba*

## Management programme

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive containment (Taupō and Rotorua districts within the Waikato region)	Sustained control	Site-led (Wetlands)
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## Impacts

Economic	Biodiversity	Soil resources	Water quantity/ quality
Human health	Social and cultural wellbeing	Amenity/recreation	Animal welfare

## Objectives

Reduce the amount of old man's beard and limit the locations that have it within the Waikato region, including in wetlands.

## Why is it a pest?

Old man's beard is an extremely vigorous climber. It can blanket desirable trees and shrubs and the vegetation in between, blocking out light, preventing regeneration and eventually strangling the supporting plants. It is a particular problem in secondary or modified primary forests, but can also infest roadsides, hedgerows, disturbed sites, and wetlands. It is tolerant of cold, moderate shade, damp, salt, and most soil types.

New infestations can come from dumped garden waste, and from the long-lived seeds that can spread widely via wind and water. New plants can also grow from sections of stem that can reroot when they touch the ground.

## Responsibility for control

**Waikato Regional Council is responsible for the control of old man's beard within the Waikato region. If you think you've seen it, call us – don't try to control it yourself.**

- All occupiers are encouraged to report old man's beard on their properties (rule OMB-1 of the *Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032*) and to liaise with the Waikato Regional Council in areas where control programmes are in place.
- No one in the Waikato region is allowed to propagate, release or spread within wetlands, old man's beard or any of the other species listed in Table 14 and 15, section 6.5.3 of the RPMP (rule WET-1).
- Waikato Regional Council may control old man's beard on your property within 20 metres of the boundary of a wetland where that wetland is clear or being cleared of old man's beard or any of the species listed in Table 24 and 15 of the RPMP (rule WET-1)

## Developers

- If old man's beard is present on a property that is to be subdivided or developed, there are additional rules and requirements that apply under section 6.6 of the RPMP 2022-2032.

**Old man's beard is banned from being sold, propagated, distributed, or included in commercial displays.**

## What does it look like?

Old man's beard is a deciduous, layering climbing vine with long ribbed, woody stems.



### Flower

- Small (2cm-3cm in diameter) four-petalled flower, creamy white and sweet scented.
- Produced in summer to autumn (December to May).



### Fruit/seed

- Seeds are grey and hairy (2mm-3mm long) with distinct white plumes (3cm-4cm long).
- Produced in dense, fluffy clusters (seed heads) in autumn, that persist on the plant over winter (hence the name old man's beard).

### Leaves

- Opposite leaves comprised of five (rarely three) widely spaced leaflets.
- Leaflets have a dull green surface, are thin and papery, and sparsely hairy.
- Leaves are lost in autumn/winter.

### Stems

- Woody stems have six prominent ribs (appear as furrows on older vines).
- Stem bark is pale and easy to rub off.

## Similar species

Old man's beard is often mistaken for native clematis species. The following characteristics of native clematis will help you distinguish them.

### Flower

- Most native clematis flower from spring to early summer (September to November).
- Flowers usually five or six petalled (depending on species).



Photo: Weedbusters

Native clematis



Old man's beard

### Fruit/seed

- This varies between native clematis species, but many are similar to old man's beard, however they do not generally persist on the vine over winter.



Native clematis



Old man's beard

### Leaves

- Leaves usually have groups of three leaflets, but occasionally six or nine (e.g. in juvenile *Clematis foetida*).
- Leaflets generally thicker than those in old man's beard, and darker often glossy green.



Photo: Weedbusters

Native clematis



Photo: Weedbusters

Old man's beard

## More information

### Advice

For advice and additional information on control methods, call our pest plant staff on freephone 0800 800 401.

Chemical company representatives, farm supply stores, garden centres or the **Weedbusters** website can also be good sources for advice.

### Publications

The following publications are available from the Waikato Regional Council. Contact us to request a copy (freephone 0800 800 401).

- **National Pest Plant Accord** (Manual of plants banned from sale, propagation and distribution) (free)
- **Plant Me Instead!** (Plants to use in place of pest plants) (free)

### Web

- Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032 – [waikatoregion.govt.nz/RPMP](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/RPMP)
- Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032 – [waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy)

