

PRIVET

Ligustrum species

Management programme

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive containment	Sustained control	Site-led (Wetlands) Chinese privet only
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Impacts

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

Objectives

Provide advice and information on the identification and control of privet species and reduce the impacts of Chinese privet in wetlands clear or being cleared of it.

Why is it a pest?

Privet is an environmental pest, rapidly invading roadsides, urban hedges and gardens, open disturbed sites and the margins of natural areas, including wetlands. All species have wide environmental tolerance, and produce masses of highly viable, bird-dispersed seeds that can germinate to form carpets of shade-tolerant seedlings. The leaves and berries of all species are poisonous to animals and people. Its strong scented flowers are an irritant or allergen to some people.

Tree privet is evergreen, tall (to over 15 metres), fast growing and long-lived, becoming a persistent canopy tree that can displace native species and eventually dominate areas of shrubland and forest.

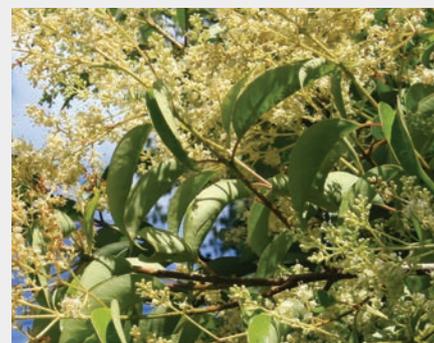
Chinese privet is an evergreen or semi-deciduous shrub or small tree (to 5 metres), with wavy-edged leaves. Shorter-lived than tree privet, it forms dense stands that continuously replace and prevent the establishment of native species.

Privet species (particularly Chinese privet and tree privet) are widespread and common in the Waikato region.



What does it look like?

Tree privet



Flower

- Small, cream-coloured flowers that are strongly scented and appear from January to March.

Fruit/seed

- Dark purple-black berries.
- Seeds spread by birds.

Leaves/stems

- Glossy leaves that are dark green on top and paler green underneath.

Chinese privet



Flower

- Small white flowers that are strongly scented and appear from September to December.

Fruit/seed

- Dark purple-black berries.
- Seeds spread by birds.

Leaves/stems

- Leaves are small and dull green with wavy edges.

Responsibility for control

All occupiers are responsible for the control of privet.

- No one in the Waikato Region is allowed to propagate, release or spread within wetlands Chinese privet or any of the other species listed in Table 14 and 15, section 6.5.3 of the RPMP (rule WET-1 of the *Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032*).
- Occupiers are responsible for controlling all Chinese privet on their property within 20 metres of the boundary of a wetland where that wetland is clear or being cleared of Chinese privet or any of the other species listed in Table 14, section 6.5.3 in the RPMP (rule GNR WET-3).

All privet species (and cultivars) are banned from being sold, propagated, distributed, or included in commercial displays.

Control methods

Physical control

- Pull out or dig up small plants, being careful to remove the entire root system so it doesn't regrow.
- If you have to cut down a larger plant, you will need to treat the stump with herbicide to stop it from regrowing.
- Desirable plant species such as native shrubs and grass should be established where soil has been disturbed. This will suppress the germination of privet and other weeds.
- To reduce the impact of privet on asthma or hay fever, regularly trim hedges to prevent flowering.

Herbicide control

Frilling

- With a sharp chisel or axe, make a deep cut into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree. Immediately saturate the cuts with herbicide.

Basal treatment of trunk

- This can be done all year round.
- Apply with a paintbrush or low pressure sprayer using a solid cone nozzle.
- Liberally treat the full circumference and the basal parts of the shrub or tree trunk in a manner that thoroughly wets at least 2-3 times the diameter of the lower stem or trunk, including the root collar area.

Cut stump treatment

- This can be done all year round.
- Cut the tree down, leaving a stump no higher than 5cm above ground level.
- Immediately paint herbicide over the entire stump surface, including the sides.

Cut and inject

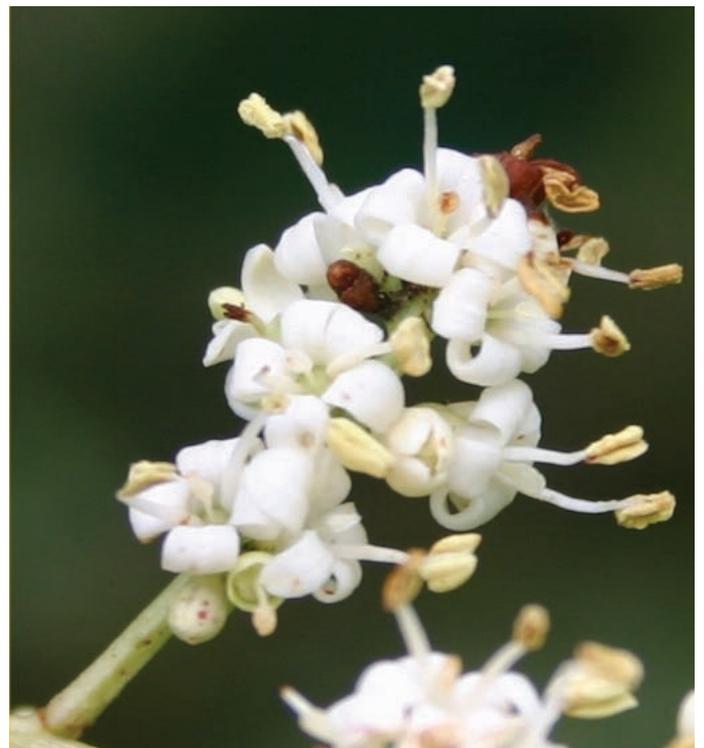
- This can be done all year round.
- Holes are drilled sloping into the sapwood at regular intervals around the tree.
- Inject herbicide into holes.
- A drench gun or similar can be used.

Spray application

- This can be done all year round.
- Spraying is more suitable for smaller or seedling plants but also consider hand pulling.
- Total coverage of leaf surfaces is required for effective control and is most effective when applied in fine weather during privet's active growing season, which is spring to autumn.

Safety when using herbicides

- Follow the instructions on the manufacturer's label.
- Always wear protective clothing.
- Always minimise the risk to your other plants.
- Contact the supplier for further advice.



Summary of herbicides and application methods for control

Herbicide	Application
Triclopyr plus penetrant	Frilling, cut and inject, cut stump treatment, spray application.
Triclopyr/picloram mix plus penetrant	Frilling, cut and inject, cut stump treatment, spray application.
Metsulfuron plus penetrant	Frilling, cut and inject, cut stump treatment, spray application.
Glyphosate plus penetrant	Frilling, cut and inject, cut stump treatment, spray application.
X-Tree Basal®	Basal treatment of trunk.
Glyphosate gel	Cut stump treatment.
Picloram gel	Cut stump treatment.

Herbicide rules will apply. You may need to notify neighbours if spraying. The Waikato Regional Plan explains the agrichemical (herbicides) use rule in section 6.2.

Disclaimer: Any product names mentioned above are not an endorsement nor are they a criticism of similar products not mentioned.

Suffering from allergies?

At certain times of the year many of us suffer from reactions to allergens in the air. Privet trees can often get blamed as the cause of allergy symptoms, but they are not usually responsible. Their flowers do have a strong and distinctive smell; however, they have large pollen and are insect pollinated so their pollen isn't usually present in high levels in the air.

Actual causes of the symptoms could be pollens such as grasses, weeds (mainly English plantain), or trees such as birch and olive.

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
- Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032 – waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy

