

Privet

All privet (*Ligustrum spp.*)

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Why it is a pest plant

Privet rapidly invades bush margins and waste areas, and may add to respiratory problems such as asthma and hayfever. The leaves and berries are poisonous to animals and humans.

Tree privet is capable of crowding out canopy trees in native forests. It may also impede native seedling germination and may eventually dominate an area of forest. Chinese privet can displace shrubs on the margins of native forests.

Responsibility for control

Land owners/occupiers are required to control privet on their property if the Waikato Regional Council receives a valid health-related complaint from a neighbour. The privet causing the problem must be within 50 metres of the property boundary. Any person may complain about privet in public amenity areas such as parks, reserves and playgrounds, including alleyways and walking tracks and expect it to be controlled. Privet is also banned from sale, propagation, distribution or commercial display.

Community initiatives

Within the 'community initiative' areas of Kawhia, Tuakau, Whatawhata, Otorohanga, Te Kuiti, Pirongia, Kihikihi, Orini, Mangatarata, Te Aroha, Waihi and Paeroa, a 'total control' rule for privet applies. This means all land owners/occupiers in these areas are required to control all privet on their property irrespective of a valid health-related complaint.

How to recognise this pest plant

Privet is an evergreen tree with strongly scented flowers and dark purple berries. Both tree privet and Chinese privet are tolerant of drought, as well as cold and wet conditions. Birds spread the seeds of privet.

How to control privet

Physical control

- Pull out or dig up small plants, being careful to remove the entire root system so that 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 hayfever, hedges can be trimmed regularly to prevent flowering.



Privet was introduced to New Zealand as an ornamental and hedging plant. Tree privet is pictured.

Identifying features

Tree privet

- Small to large evergreen tree.
- Glossy leaves that are dark green on top and paler green underneath.
- Small, cream-coloured flowers are strongly scented and appear from January to March.

Chinese privet

- Small evergreen tree/shrub.
- Leaves are small and dull green with wavy edges.
- Small white flowers are strongly scented and appear from September to December.

Plant type

Aquatic

Fern

Grass

Ground cover

✓ Shrub

✓ Tree

Vine

Disposal

✓ Burn

✗ Compost

✓ Herbicide

✗ Bury deeply

All land occupiers in the Waikato region are required to destroy this pest if a valid health complaint is received

Summary of herbicides and application methods for control

When using herbicides:

- read the instructions on the manufacturer's label closely
- always wear protective clothing
- always minimise the risk to desirable plants
- contact the supplier for further advice.

Herbicide	Application
Metsulfuron such as Escort®, Associate®) + penetrant (such as Pulse®).	Spray 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, spring to autumn.
Metsulfuron (such as Escort®, Associate®) + penetrant (such as Pulse®) or undiluted Tordon Brushkiller® using an animal drench pack with a gun.	Injection method – all year round Holes are drilled sloping into the sapwood at regular intervals around the tree. Immediately saturate the holes with herbicide.
Metsulfuron (such as Escort®, Associate®) + penetrant (such as Pulse®).	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.
Glyphosate (such as Roundup®) or metsulfuron (such as Escort®, Associate®) + penetrant (such as Pulse®). Vigilant gel®.	Stump treatment – 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.



Chinese privet.

More information

Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS).

What makes a pest a pest? – A guide to the Waikato Regional Pest Management Strategy (free).

Plant Me Instead – Plants to Use in Place of Common Pest Plants (free).

The New Zealand Pest Plant Manual (National Pest Plant Accord Identification Guide) – \$10.00 incl. GST.

Poisonous Plants and Fungi in New Zealand – A Guide for Parents, Schools and Child Minders (\$15.00 incl. GST).

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Management control

After the initial control, it's important to:

- revisit the site at least annually to control regrowth
- stop weeds invading by replanting with desirable plants (preferably natives) once regrowth is no longer a problem.

Important contacts

For additional advice and information on effective methods of control contact your pest plant officer, chemical company representative, farm supply store or garden centre.

Biosecurity pest plant contractors in the Waikato region – 0800 BIOSECURITY (0800 246 732).

For information on what we do phone the Waikato Regional Council's freephone 0800 800 401 or check out www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/pests.

For more information on pest plants, check out www.weedbusters.org.nz.

