

# Japanese Honeysuckle

*Lonicera japonica*

Japanese honeysuckle has the ability to invade disturbed forest and margins, forming a complete blanket over small trees and shrubs. It out-competes these other plants by smothering and suppressing them. It has also become a problem in rural situations, gradually killing out hedges. This plant is becoming an increasingly troublesome species.



## Status

Japanese honeysuckle is no longer permitted to be sold, propagated, distributed or commercially displayed on the basis that it is now a Regional Surveillance Plant Pest within the Auckland Region. The objective is to prevent its further spread by humans. Land occupiers are encouraged to control infestations of this plant without legal obligation. (The restriction of sale, propagation, and distribution includes cultivars of this plant but not hybrids.)

## Origin

Japanese honeysuckle is native to Eastern Asia. It was originally introduced as an ornamental hedging plant and was first reported in the wild in 1926. It is now abundant in both the North and South Islands and in Auckland is widespread throughout the region.

## Description

Japanese honeysuckle is a vigorous, smothering, climber reaching high up trees, and is capable of growing up to 15m per year. Evergreen or semi-evergreen, its stems are hairy and purplish when it is young. The leaves are 2.5-12cm x 1.5-6cm, oval shaped, and a lighter green on the underneath of

the leaf than on the upper surface. In winter or in low light, the leaves may be toothed or cut. Japanese honeysuckle flowers from September to May. It's fragrant, paired, tubular flowers, may be white or yellow. The berries they produce are black.

## Invasion

Japanese honeysuckle is spread mainly by birds eating the berries and distributing the seeds in their droppings. It may be spread (to a limited degree) by road and hedge-cutting machinery, deliberate plantings and infestations caused by illegal dumping of garden refuse.

## Control

Smaller infestations can be controlled physically by cutting to the ground and digging out the roots. Care must be taken with the cut material, because the plant will resprout if the stems are left to touch the ground. To avoid resprouting the cut material should be composted or taken to an authorised refuse site for deep burial. Alternatively, the plant can be grazed by stock.

Japanese honeysuckle can also be controlled with herbicides. Overall spraying will contain plants growing on the ground, but it is not recommended where trees are growing under or through honeysuckle. It is recommended that vines are first cut back and the regrowth foliage then treated. Herbicides that can be used include:

- Escort  
Handgun .....35gm + 100mls Pulse per 100 litres of water  
Knapsack .....5gm + 10mls Pulse per 10 litres of water
  - Tordon Brushkiller NF  
Handgun.....600mls per 100 litres of water  
Knapsack .....60mls per 10 litres of water
  - Yates Woody Weedkiller  
Knapsack .....120mls per 10 litres of water
- Another option is to cut the base of the stem, and (within 10-15 mins) paint it using a liberal dose of one of the following herbicide mixtures:  
Escort.....5gm per 1 litre of water
- Tordon Brushkiller NF1 part per 12 parts of water or diesel
  - Tordon 50D1 part per 12 parts of water or diesel
  - Yates Woody Weedkiller1 part per 4 parts of water

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

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