

Kahili ginger and yellow ginger

Hedychium gardnerianum and *Hedychium flavescens*

WHY IT IS A PEST PLANT

Wild ginger forms dense clumps in native forests, smothering young plants and preventing native seedling establishment. This makes it a serious threat to native ecosystems. If left unchecked, wild ginger could permanently replace rare plants.

There are two types of wild ginger in New Zealand – kahili ginger and yellow ginger.

In New Zealand only kahili ginger will set seed. The seeds are spread by birds. However, both spread vigorously from large, fleshy underground stems called 'rhizomes'. Many new infestations come from garden waste dumped in the countryside.

Wild ginger is now scattered throughout the Waikato region and is classed as a 'containment pest', requiring the removal of all plants (total control). The largest infestations within the Waikato occur on the Coromandel Peninsula and on the west coast between Raglan and Mokau.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROL

All landowners/occupiers are responsible for the control of wild ginger on their property and are required to work with Waikato Regional Council in areas where control programmes are in place. Wild ginger is also banned from sale, propagation, distribution or commercial display.

HOW TO CONTROL WILD GINGER

Waikato Regional Council aims to eradicate wild ginger from the Waikato region. Removing established plants and detecting any new infestations early is vital to achieve this goal. Landowners can choose to remove wild ginger independently, or they can contact their local biosecurity pest plant officer for assistance.

Both ginger species spread quite slowly, so systematic eradication is possible over large areas.

All land occupiers in the Waikato region are required to destroy this pest where it occurs on their land.



Only kahili ginger sets seed in New Zealand.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Kahili ginger

- Stems up to 2m high.
- Large scented flower head (25-45cm long).
- Lemon-yellow flowers with red stamens (January-March).
- Up to 100 red seeds produced per flower head.
- Large waxy leaves, arranged alternately on stem.

Yellow ginger

- Taller than kahili ginger – stems up to 3m high.
- Smaller cone-like flower head.
- Smaller creamy yellow-white flowers (May-June).
- Does not produce seed.
- Leaves are narrower and more upright.

Physical control

- Small seedlings can be hand pulled and disposed of carefully.
- Small clumps can be dug out, as long as all of the root system is removed and disposed of safely. Rhizomes can be placed in a black plastic bag and rotted, or placed in a weak herbicide mix, crushed, dried then burned. Larger clumps must be sprayed.
- When removing kahili ginger, remove flower heads as a stopgap before spraying or removing the whole plant. This won't kill the plant but will stop it from seeding that year. Burn the seed heads.

Herbicide control

Cut stump treatment

- To treat larger plants, slash stems horizontally near the roots. Immediately apply the herbicide to the stems and roots with a paintbrush, eyedropper or small squeeze bottle. Leave the plants in the ground until the roots have dried off.
- If using the herbicide Vigilant® and the plant has more than four rhizomes per shoot, also drill a 10mm hole into every fourth rhizome (from a shoot to 80 per cent the depth of the rhizome). Fill the hole with Vigilant®.

Spray application

- Totally cover the foliage and roots until they are wet but not dripping. Be careful not to spray desirable plants. Do not remove the leaves or stems until they have gone brown and dried out (three or four months). Best results are achieved from spring to late autumn.
- Alternatively, cut and remove all stems and leaves and rake away ground litter to expose the rhizomes, spray them, and then cover with leaves. The plant will take 12 to 15 months to fully die and rot. This method is particularly suitable for densely covered steep banks where removal of the ginger could cause problems.

Follow-up management

After 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.

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
Escort®	Cut stump treatment, knapsack application, handgun application
Vigilant®	Cut stump treatment

Disclaimer: Although this document has been prepared in good faith from a number of sources believed to be reliable, the Waikato Regional Council does not give any warranty that all information contained is accurate or complete, or that advice given will be appropriate in all circumstances. Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticisms of similar products not mentioned.



Ginger forms dense clumps.

MORE INFORMATION

Contacts

- Waikato Regional Council
 - pest plant staff – freephone 0800 BIOSEC (0800 246 732)
 - main switch – freephone 0800 800 401
- Chemical company representatives, farm supply stores and garden centres can also be good sources of advice.

Publications

Download or order the following publications at www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/publications or freephone 0800 800 401.

- National Pest Plant Accord – manual of plants banned from sale (\$10 or free download at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa)
- Plant me instead – plants to use in place of common pest plants (free)
- Poisonous Plants and Fungi in New Zealand – a guide for parents, schools and child minders (\$15)
- Waikato Regional Pest Management Strategy (free)
- What makes pest a pest? A guide to Waikato Regional Pest Management Strategy (free)

Web

- www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/wildginger
- www.weedbusters.org.nz
- www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/rpms

