

Woolly nightshade

Solanum mauritianum

Description

Shrub or small tree up to 10 m in height.

Leaves: Large, greyish-green. Densely covered with felt-like hairs. Very pungent smell when crushed.

Flowers: Purple, in clusters at the ends of branches almost year round.

Fruit: Large berries are initially green but ripen to yellow.



Origin

Native of South America. Introduced to New Zealand as a garden plant.

Where is it found?

Woolly nightshade can be found almost anywhere in warmer areas of the Bay of Plenty, especially coastal areas.

How does it spread?

Seeds are mostly spread by bird, sometimes for considerable distances.

Why is it a problem?

Woolly nightshade forms dense stands, crowding out and suppressing all other plants. It invades pastoral land, native forest margins and urban areas.

Woolly nightshade is toxic to humans and possibly stock, it irritates the skin, eyes, nose and throat.

Status as a pest plant in the Bay of Plenty

Woolly nightshade is a Containment Pest Plant in the Bay of Plenty Regional Pest Management Plan.

Rules require land occupiers to destroy any woolly nightshade on their properties.

It is an offence under the Biosecurity Act to propagate, sell, distribute, release or spread woolly nightshade in the Bay of Plenty.

Assistance may be available from Bay of Plenty Regional Council by way of approved programmes.

How do I get rid of it?

Manual

Seedlings and small plants can be pulled or dug out.

Stem frilling and injecting

Use at any time of year for larger plants.

Use glyphosate (e.g. Roundup®) The herbicide should be used neat (not watered down).

Ringbark the plant by applying downward cuts with a machete or tomahawk, below the lowest branch and as close to ground level as possible. Cuts should overlap to cover the full circumference of the stem.

Apply herbicide liberally into each downward cut around the tree's circumference using a small trigger sprayer or drench gun.



Freshly cut stump ready for herbicide treatment.

Stump Treatment

Use at any time of year for scattered plants.

Use glyphosate (e.g. Roundup®) at the rate of 1 part glyphosate to 4 parts water (e.g. 1 cup to 4 cups).

Cut the plants down as close as possible to the ground.

Apply herbicide mix liberally to the cut surface and sides of the stump to ground level using a small trigger sprayer or knapsack.

Spraying

Use at any time of year for large numbers of smaller plants.

Ensure thorough coverage of the plants with a light spray.

Spray with Aminopyralid (e.g. Tordon® Max).

With knapsack or CDAX unit use 60 ml per 10 L water.

With handgun use 300 ml per 100 L water.

Or for controlling woolly nightshade and gorse together:

Spray with Brushkiller (e.g. Tordon® or Agpro tricloram).

With knapsack or CDAX unit use 60 ml per 10 L water.

With handgun use 250 ml per 100 L water.

Other herbicide options are available.



When spraying any herbicide, use equipment in good condition and wear protective clothing

Aerial spraying

May be appropriate for large areas of plants. Seek the advice of a Land Management Officer for your situation before spraying.

Notes:

Woolly nightshade grows from seed to seed-bearing maturity very quickly. No matter what control method is used, follow-up control of seedlings will be required at least every six months until the soil seed bank is exhausted.

Woolly nightshade is often found amongst other brushweeds such as gorse. Some herbicides commonly used for spraying brushweeds (e.g. metsulfuron) will not control woolly nightshade. In this situation add Tordon® Max or Brushkiller to the spray mix.

Biological control

The woolly nightshade lacebug, which sucks the sap of the plant weakening it, has been released in the Bay of Plenty in 2011. It will take time for this to become widespread and the level of damage it will cause is as yet unknown.



Woolly nightshade may form dense stands, crowding out and suppressing all other plants.

CAUTION: When using herbicide please **READ THE LABEL** thoroughly to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this fact sheet regarding herbicides does not necessarily appear on the labels of the products concerned. Bay of Plenty Regional Council does not accept liability for any damage that may arise from the use of herbicides at non-standard rates. Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.

For more information contact a Bay of Plenty Regional Council Land Management Officer



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