

Privet (*Ligustrum lucidum* and *Ligustrum sinense*)

Introduction

Two problem species of privet are currently found in the Bay of Plenty. These are tree privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*).

Privet is a highly invasive pest plant. Both species rapidly colonise waste areas or stands of trees and will displace other plants in regenerating native communities.

The pollen and scent from privet may also contribute to allergies such as hay fever and asthma although this has not been clinically proven.



Tree privet flower and leaf



Chinese privet flower and leaf

Pest Plant Status

In the Bay of Plenty privet is a **Regional Surveillance Pest Plant**. (Refer Environment Bay of Plenty's Regional Pest Management Strategy.)

Land occupiers are not required to control privet on their properties but are encouraged to do so. Assistance may be available from Environment Bay of Plenty by way of approved programmes.

It is banned from sale, propagation and distribution within the Bay of Plenty.

Origin

Both tree privet and Chinese privet are native to China. They were introduced to New Zealand as ornamental and hedging plants. Both species were first recorded in the wild in the 1950s.

Description

Privet is tolerant of shade and drought, as well as cold or wet conditions. The leaves and black berries of both species are poisonous.

Tree privet is a small to large tree. It has dark green, glossy leaves. The small, cream-coloured flowers are strongly scented. Flowering occurs from January to March.

Chinese privet is a small evergreen tree. Its leaves are small and a dull green colour and the small white flowers are strongly scented. Flowering occurs from September to December.

Invasion

Both privet species spread in two main ways:

- by birds which eat the berries and distribute the seeds in their droppings.

- by humans who deliberately plant privet and cause new infestations to occur.

Environment Bay of Plenty pest plant officers are available to advise on control methods suitable to each particular situation.

Control Methods

Manual

Privet can be controlled by pulling or digging out seedlings. Dispose of the plant material by composting or mulching it, providing it is removed before seeds ripen.

Herbicide

Before using herbicides, be aware of any horticultural activity in the local district and apply herbicide sprays with caution. Operators are liable for damage arising from spray drift.



Chinese privet invading pastoral land

For overall spray application, the following herbicides are suitable:

- **Glyphosate** (e.g. Roundup®)
Knapsack:
150 ml per 10 litres of water
Handgun:
1 litre per 100 litres of water

NB: The addition of a penetrant (e.g. Pulse®) at a rate of 20 ml per 10 litres of water is recommended to improve herbicide uptake.

- **Metsulfuron-methyl** (e.g. Escort® or Meturon®)
Knapsack:
5 g per 10 litres of water
Handgun:
35 g per 100 litres of water

NB: The addition of a penetrant (e.g. Pulse®) at 10 ml per 10 litres of water will improve herbicide uptake.

Stem cut and inject

This method is suitable for privet plants with a stem diameter of 50 mm or more. Ring bark the base of the stem with downward axe/machete strokes, cutting into the sap wood. Apply herbicide to the point of runoff into each downward cut immediately after cuts have been made.

Suitable herbicides and dilution rates for cut and inject treatment are:

- **Glyphosate** (e.g. Roundup®)
use neat (i.e. undiluted)
- **Metsulfuron-methyl** (e.g. Escort®, Meturon®)
20 g (+ 10 ml penetrant e.g. Pulse®) per litre of water

Stump swabbing

Cut plant off about 50 mm above ground level. Apply herbicide mixtures to top *and* sides of the stump. The addition of a penetrant (e.g. Pulse®) will aid uptake of the herbicide.

Suitable herbicides and dilution rates for stump treatment of privet are:

- **Glyphosate** (e.g. Roundup®)
2 litres + 10 ml penetrant (e.g. Pulse®) per 10 litres of water
- **Metsulfuron-methyl** (e.g. Escort®, Meturon®)
5 g + 10 ml penetrant (e.g. Pulse®) per 1 litre of water

NB: Herbicide must be applied immediately after stumps have been cut.

Herbicide is most effective when applied during privet's active growing season – spring or autumn in fine weather. If using Metsulfuron-methyl, avoid use over or near desirable plants, or in areas where their roots may extend.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide READ THE LABEL thoroughly and follow all instructions and safety requirements.

Information in this fact sheet regarding herbicides does not necessarily appear on the labels of the products concerned.

Environment Bay of Plenty does not accept liability for any damage that may arise from use of chemicals at non-standard rates.

Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.



For further information and advice, contact your local pest plant officer at Environment Bay of Plenty:

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This fact sheet was prepared by Environment Bay of Plenty's Pest Plant Section.

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