

# Banana Passionfruit

## *Passiflora tripartita*

**Progressive Control Plant under the  
West Coast Regional Pest Plant  
Management Strategy**



### National Pest Plant Accord Status

The Banana Passionfruit, *Passiflora tripartita*, formerly known as *Passiflora mixta* and *P. mollissima*, is listed in the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand. For more information refer to the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand website at [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa). The closely related Northern Banana Passionfruit, *P. tarminiana* is also an NPPA listed pest plant.

### Where has Banana Passionfruit come from?

Banana Passionfruit is native to Brazil and Columbia, South America and was introduced into many Pacific countries, including New Zealand, as a fruiting vine. Having adapted to New Zealand's cooler climate it has long since escaped home gardens in most parts of the country. The plant grows well in the warmer coastal parts of the West Coast.

### What does Banana Passionfruit look like?

Banana Passionfruit is a high-climbing evergreen vine. The glossy leaves are three lobed (the middle lobe being the longer) with toothed edges and hairy underneath. The tubular pink flowers have yellow and white centres and a drooping habit. The flowers grow 6-9cms long, developing into oval fruit up to 14cm long. Fruit are green at first, ripening to yellow or orange-yellow. The pulp is orange, sweet and edible with many red-black seeds.

The plant is spread by seed (birds, rats and possums eating the fruit) and also from stem fragments which revegetate readily.

### Why is Banana Passionfruit a Pest Plant?

The rapid growth and dense, smothering habit of the Banana Passionfruit vine are the key reasons for it having become a pest plant. The plants mature after only one year and can live up to twenty years. If allowed to smother bush margins the plants will also reduce natural biodiversity. The fruit also provides food for pest animals such as rats and possums.

Preferred habitats are open fertile sites including domestic gardens, farmland, riverbanks, road and bush margins and disturbed land.

There are less vigorous species of passionfruit which can be grown for home consumption, e.g. Black Passionfruit *Passiflora edulis*



*Top right: A Banana Passionfruit vine smothers other trees [EW]*

*At right: Banana Passionfruit detail (leaves, flowers and fruit) [ARC]*

## What are the best methods of control?

The method of control chosen for Banana Passionfruit will depend on the size and scale of the infestation. As the roots pull out easily some sites may be manageable by manual methods only.

### **Manual Methods**

Locate and handpull seedling plants, ensuring you get all the roots. Place on black plastic to rot down in full sun or dispose of to lined landfill in black plastic bags. Follow this up at regular intervals.

### **Herbicide Methods**

There are two ways to deal with larger infestations, i.e. spraying and stump-swabbing. If loss of the plants the vine is growing over is not an issue, then spraying is a good option. If you want to retain the plants the vine is growing over then use stump-swabbing.

Spraying: Spray the vines on a still day (to prevent wind drift) prior to fruit setting. Use a herbicide containing the active ingredient glyphosate (e.g. Roundup + pentrant) OR triclopyr (Grazon) OR trichlopyr/picloram (Tordon Brushkiller). The use of a dyemarker in the spray can be helpful in preventing double-spraying and spray wastage when dealing with large infestations.

Stump-swabbing: Cut the vines off just above ground level and swab the root stumps immediately with a glyphosate or metsulfuron product (e.g. Roundup or Escort, Zeal) OR use Vigilant Gel. Also tie off the hanging ends of the cut vines, ensuring they are well above ground level to prevent them re-rooting. Dispose of any cut material as per the Manual Method.

**For personal safety please use all herbicides as per manufacturer's labelling**

### **Biocontrols**

As of November 2010 NZ Landcare Research are in the process of trialling the leaf, flower and fruit eating moth, *Pyrausta norella*, as a potential biocontrol agent for Banana Passionfruit. For an update on this please contact the WCRC Weedbusters Co-ordinator or see [www.landcareresearch.co.nz](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz)

## Where can I get more help?

For further information call either of the Regional Weedbusters Co-ordinators. They are:

**Mary Trayes:** Environmental Information Officer, West Coast Regional Council (768 0466 or 0508 800 118)

**Tom Belton:** Technical Support Officer Biosecurity & Weeds, Department of Conservation, West Coast - Tai Poutini Conservancy, Hokitika (03 756 9100)



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)

*The West Coast Regional Council does not accept liability for any advice given on this sheet regarding application of herbicides for pest plant control. The brand names listed imply neither endorsement of those brands, nor criticism of any other brands not listed.*