

German Ivy

Senecio milkanoides

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



National Pest Plant Accord Status

German Ivy is NOT currently listed on the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA), i.e. it is not banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand. However as of 2011, it is listed as a pest plant in a number of New Zealand regions such as Northland, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury and Southland.

Where has German Ivy come from?

German Ivy was originally brought from South Africa to New Zealand as a garden plant. It has long since escaped home gardens to the wild where it has become a pest plant in many places.

What does German Ivy look like?

German Ivy is a scrambling or climbing vine growing 3-5m high. It has soft, hairless bright green ivy-like leaves and produces yellow daisy flowers without the outer ray florets (unlike the similar Cape Ivy which does have flowers with outer ray florets). A distinguishing feature of German Ivy are the small ear-shaped appendages found at the base of most leaf stalks.

The plant name can be confusing as botanically it is a member of the daisy family of plants (despite the lack of ray florets) and not an ivy.

German Ivy sets viable seed which can be carried on the wind or by ground disturbance (foraging animals, vehicles etc).

The favoured habitats of German Ivy are coastal areas, lowland forest margins, roadsides and other wasteland areas plus home gardens.

Why is German Ivy a Pest Plant?

German Ivy climbs over other sub-canopy species, suppressing tree growth, shading out other plants and preventing the growth of new plants. It can spread over large areas beneath tall forest canopy, changing the ecosystem of the local plant community.

The plant spreads readily and is hard to control because hand-pulling causes the stems to break off and if sprayed, other desirable plants may also be destroyed.



Top right: German Ivy flower and leaf detail. [USGS]

Above: German Ivy smothering native trees. [Te Ara]

What are the best methods of control?

A combined approach may be required for complete eradication of German Ivy.

Manual Methods

Hand pull small plants very carefully or preferably dig out small plants, taking care not to break any parts of the plant off. Ensure roots are disposed of by drying and burning OR disposing of to lined landfill. Composting is an option for the herbage or dry and burn.

Herbicide Methods

A mixture of the following may be needed depending on the height and size of the infestation

Stump swabbing: Cut stems down to just above ground level then immediately apply herbicide with brush or applicator. Suitable herbicides are glyphosate products (Roundup, Watkins Weedkiller etc) at 100ml/1L water OR metsulfuron-methyl products (Escort, Zeal) at 5gm/1L water.

Partial Spraying: Cut stems below waist height, then spray down from there. Suitable herbicides are glyphosate products (Roundup, Watkins Weedkiller etc) at 10mls/1L water or metsulfuron-methyl products (Escort, Zeal) at 2gm/10L water + penetrant

Full Spraying: (**NOTE** that this will probably kill or damage other plants as well.)

Handgun: use 1L glyphosate/100L water + 200mls penetrant

Knapsack: use 100mls glyphosate/10L water + 20mls penetrant

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

Biocontrols

There are no known biocontrol agents for German Ivy at present.

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

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.