

Japanese Honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica

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



National Pest Plant Accord Status

Japanese Honeysuckle 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

Where has Japanese Honeysuckle come from?

Japanese Honeysuckle is native to Eastern Asia, including Japan, and was introduced into New Zealand as an ornamental hedging plant. It was first reported as having naturalised in the wild in 1926 and has since spread throughout the country. The initial spread was relatively slow because the plants set little viable seed due poor pollination. However Landcare Research reported in November 2009 that plant numbers in many places had reached that threshold where cross pollination, with setting of viable seed, was now occurring. Their expectation is that the numbers of plants set from seed will increase significantly.



Top right: Japanese Honeysuckle
in flower [AC]

Above: Japanese Honeysuckle
smothers native bush [JBoow AC]

What does Japanese Honeysuckle look like?

Japanese Honeysuckle is a vigorous evergreen climber which can grow up to 15m per year. It has long, tough, wiry stems which twine clockwise, are purplish and hairy when young turning woody as they mature. Leaves are oval shaped, 3-12cm x 2-6cm and set in opposite pairs along the stems. They are shiny dark right green above and lighter green underneath, usually entire but sometimes wavy edged to lobed in cooler areas. Double lipped tubular sweetly scented white flowers, aging to yellow, are produced from September through until May followed by glossy, egg-shaped black berries (5-7mm) containing many seeds.

The plant has adapted well to a range of climatic and soil conditions in New Zealand, although it grows best in deeper valley soils. The spread of Japanese Honeysuckle has been facilitated by its ability to revegetate (layering of the long stems), poor disposal of unwanted plants, roadside machinery and by seed (birds, possums).

Why is Japanese Honeysuckle a Pest Plant?

Japanese Honeysuckle is a pest plant because of its vigorous growth and dense, smothering habit. It can kill the bush it grows over leading to canopy collapse as well as suppressing native revegetation. This leaves the way open for other weeds/pest plants to gain a hold.

The plant is moderately fast growing, hardy, long-lived and tolerant of a range of conditions making it difficult to eradicate.

What are the best methods of control?

Japanese Honeysuckle is a difficult plant to control, usually requiring a mix of methods and 2-3 applications for final eradication. Watch for stumps re-sprouting and cut stems layering. Seeding may be minimal so once areas are bare and clear, replant with desired plants.

Manual Methods

Dig out individual plants and small infestations, then either dry and all roots and stems OR dispose of them to lined landfill (to prevent re-generation). Do not compost.

Herbicide Methods

Choose one of the following depending on the situation. If the plants being smothered are wanted then use a non-spraying option. If vines are cut and left, ensure they are hung well up in the trees to prevent them layering. Otherwise dispose of cut stems by drying and burning OR disposing of to lined landfill.

- Stump-swabbing: cut stems down to 15cms above ground level and swab immediately with a concentrated herbicide. Suitable herbicides are those with the active ingredients triclopyr (e.g. Triclopyr 600EC at 100ml/1L water) OR picloram + triclopyr (e.g. Tordon Brushkiller at 200ml/1L water) OR Yates Woody Weedkiller (at 200ml/1L water) OR Vigilant Gel.
- Spray re-growth: over winter cut the stems at waist height then spray the spring re-growth using herbicides with the active ingredients glyphosate (e.g. Glyphosate 360, Roundup at 10ml/1L water + penetrant) OR metsulfuron-methyl (e.g. Escort at 2gm/10L water + penetrant).
- Spray full growth: during the summer-autumn using herbicides with the active ingredients glyphosate (e.g. Glyphosate 360, Roundup at 10ml/1L water) OR metsulfuron-methyl (e.g. Escort at 5gm/10L water + penetrant) OR clopyralid (Versatill at 50ml/10L water) OR picloram + triclopyr (e.g. Tordon Brushkiller at 60ml/10L water). Adjust quantities if doing bulk spraying with a handgun.

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

Biocontrols

As of January 2011 New Zealand Landcare Research are conducting trials with four imported insects to ascertain if any may be suitable for release as biological controls for Japanese Honeysuckle. For an update on this please contact the WCRC Weedbusters Co-ordinator or see 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

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.