

Wild Ginger

Hedychium gardnerianum
Hedychium flavescens

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



National Pest Plant Accord Status

The Wild Gingers, both Kahili and Yellow, are both listed in the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) and are 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 have the Wild Gingers come from?

Both Kahili Ginger and Yellow Ginger were introduced to New Zealand from India as garden plants in the mid 19th century. However it was not until the 1940's that Kahili Ginger was reported as having escaped home gardens to grow wild in many part of the upper North Island. With the West Coast coastal areas having a similar mild climate, both plants, particularly Kahili Ginger, have begun to naturalise here necessitating control measures.

What do the Wild Ginger plants look like?



Kahili Ginger: herbaceous perennial with rhizomous root system growing to 2m high. Large ovate leaves 20-45cm long arranged alternately on vertical stems. From February to April strongly perfumed yellow flowers with red stamens appear on a large flowerhead followed by setting of viable seed.

Yellow Ginger: herbaceous perennial with rhizomous root system growing to 2.5m. Large ovate leaves 20-45cms long (but narrower than Kahili Ginger leaves) arranged alternately on vertical stems. Strongly perfumed creamy- yellow flowers appear on a smaller flowerhead through May and June.

On the West Coast Kahili Ginger is more common than Yellow Ginger as it sets seed which can be spread by birds. Both plants are also easily spread by revegetation of small pieces of the rhizomous roots. Sometimes this has been due to poor disposal of garden waste.

*Top right: Kahili Ginger near Waimangaroa [T Belton, DOC]
At left: difference between the two flowers [T James EW]*

Why are the Wild Gingers Pest Plants?

Both plants can form large clumps with dense masses of rhizomes up to a metre thick under the ground. This excludes other wanted plants and prevents establishment of native seedlings. Unchecked, Wild Ginger can rapidly become a major threat to native ecosystems in the warmer lowland and coastal areas of the West Coast. For individual landowners, dealing with the large masses of rhizomes can be a major task, requiring time, effort and expense to achieve eradication. Dealing with Ginger plants gone wild has the potential to be even more onerous.

What are the best methods of control?

The choice of method used for Wild Ginger will depend on the size of the plants and their situation. Spraying works well but may be a problem for nearby plants or difficult for hard to get at plants (e.g. down a bank). If there is a big task ahead, one option is to cut all the flower heads off Kahili Ginger plants so at least they won't set seed, then deal with them as you have time/money.

Manual Methods

Pull small seedlings carefully and dispose of to lined landfill. Dig out small clumps taking all care to get every piece of the root system. Dispose of the roots to lined landfill or place on black plastic and spray with herbicide to ensure they do not re-vegetate. Leaves and stems can be burnt if left to dry out.

Herbicide Methods

For larger plants the two options are stump-swabbing or spraying. Choice of method is dependant on the location, degree of infestation and size of the plant/s. If nearby plants are wanted, then stump-swabbing is a good choice but if the loss of nearby plants is not a problem spraying may be better.

Stump-swabbing

Slash the plants down to just above the pink root collar, ensuring cuts are horizontal. Apply herbicide concentrate immediately to the stumps with paint brush or supplied applicator. Herbicides recommended are those containing the active ingredients metsulfuron-methyl at 600gm/Kg (e.g. Escort, Meturon, Zeal) OR picloram (Vigilant gel). Repeat the following season as necessary.

Spraying

For larger plants/infestations use a metsulfuron-methyl based product (as above) at the following rates:

- Knapsack: 5gms/10L water + 10mls spreader or penetrant (e.g. Pulse)
- Handgun: 25gms/100L water + 100mls spreader or penetrant (e.g. Pulse)

Ensure all parts of the plant are well covered with spray but not 'dripping' then wait until the leaves and stems have gone completely brown (3-4 months) before removing. If the rhizomes re-sprout, spray again.

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

Biocontrols

As of February 2011 NZ Landcare Research is doing research on a suitable biocontrol for both species of Wild Ginger. 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.