

Cathedral Bells

Cobaea scandens

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



Suspected sightings of this Total Control Plant should be reported promptly to the West Coast Regional Council

National Pest Plant Accord Status

Cathedral Bells 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 Cathedral Bells come from?

Cathedral Bells originate from Central and South America and were first brought into New Zealand as ornamental plants. The had plant naturalised well to New Zealand conditions by the 1950's and escaped home gardens to thrive on marginal land in many parts of the country.

What do Cathedral Bells look like?

Cathedral Bells is a perennial, evergreen vine with stems up to 10m long. It has bell-shaped flowers that are green and 'smelly' when young, but turn purple once the pollen is shed. Flowering occurs over an extended period from August through to May.

The seed capsules are hare, oval and between 5.5 and 8.5cm long. These split into sections to release numerous flat, winged seeds. These are spread short distances by wind and further by soil and water movement.

If flowers are not present the plant can be further recognised from its angled stems and hook-like branch tips. Leaves are alternate (usually with three pair of leaflets) and dark green in colour above and whitish below. Flower stems are twining and purplish.



Top right: Cathedral Bells vine

Above: Cathedral Bells flower

[Photos ARC]

Why is Cathedral Bells a Pest Plant?

Cathedral Bells is a vigorous and long lived vine which has the potential to smother other shrub and tree species, both native and non-native. Plants are spread by seed or re-growth from vine fragments .

As it can handle a wide range of environmental conditions including shade, drought, wind salt and varying soil types, it grows well in a wide range of habitats including gardens, undisturbed native forests, forestry blocks, shelter belts, gardens and marginal areas such as roadsides and riverbanks.

What are the best methods of control?

A combination of methods may be necessary to eradicate Cathedral Bells. Sites should be monitored at regular intervals in case new plants have seeded or there has been regrowth.

Manual Methods

Single plants can be traced via the vines back to the roots, the soil loosened and the roots dug out, vine and all with a spade. Hang the vine up in the trees to wither and die. Any vines left trailing along the ground should be removed and burnt or disposed of carefully to landfill in black plastic bags.

Herbicide Methods

If removal of the roots is not practical the vines should be cut as close to the ground as possible, and the stumps painted liberally with one of the following herbicide mixtures:

- Vigilant Apply undiluted from tube
- Glyphosate 1 part per 4 parts water
- Yates Woody Weedkiller 1 part per 4 parts water
- Banvine 1 part per 4 parts water

Where cathedral bells is rambling over waste ground or the infestation is too large to trace the vines back to the roots, an overall foliage spray is generally a more practical option. The following mixtures give effective control;

- Grazon: Knapsack, 120mls per 10 litres water
- Banvine: Knapsack, 120mls per 10 litres water
- Glyphosate: (e.g. Roundup) Knapsack, 200mls per 10 litres water

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

Biocontrols

There are no known biocontrol agents for Cathedral Bells at present.

Where can I get more help?

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

Mary Traves: 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.