

Woolly Nightshade

Solanum mauritianum

**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 or DOC Conservancy Office, Hokitika**

National Pest Plant Accord Status

Woolly Nightshade is listed on the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand. For more information contact MAF Biosecurity New Zealand or see their website at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa

Where has it come from?

Also known as tobacco weed, flannel weed and kerosene plant, Woolly Nightshade is native to Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina in South America. The plant was introduced to New Zealand early on and was well established by 1880 in the North Island. Spread to the wetter, cooler parts of the South Island has been slower. With only one known infestation on the West Coast, eradication (total control) of this plant is being aimed for.



What does Woolly Nightshade look like?

Woolly Nightshade is a rapidly growing shrub or small tree reaching 5-10m. It has a life span of 20-30 years and produces prolific seed with long viability in the ground.

The large oval leaves are 10-25cm long and 3.5-10cm wide, grey-green in colour and furry. The flowers are mauve- purple with yellow anthers and grow in clusters at the ends of the branches year round. However most of the berries are produced from late spring - summer flowering. Initially green, the berries turn yellow on ripening. The plant has a distinctive kerosene-like smell when the leaves are rubbed together.

*Top right: Woolly nightshade leaf, flower, berry detail [Awhitu.org]
Below: Woolly nightshade trees can grow up to 3m per year*

Why is it Woolly Nightshade a Pest Plant?

Woolly Nightshade is a highly invasive, fast growing species which form dense stands to the detriment of native or other preferred species. Seeds which fall to the ground sprout readily and others are spread by birds. The plant is tolerant of a variety of climates and soil types.

All care should be taken when dealing with any parts of the Woolly Nightshade plant. The berries are toxic and the leaves shed fine hairs when touched which can irritate skin, eyes, nose and throat. Stock may also be at risk.

What are the best methods of control?

Ensure suspect plants are correctly identified, then action preferred control method/s as soon as possible. For assistance with identification and up to date control methods, contact a Regional Weedbusters Co-ordinator (see below). All care should be taken when dealing with Woolly Nightshade because of potential skin irritation and respiratory problems. Wear protective clothing.

Manual Methods

Pulling small plants up to 50-60cm tall is effective for small or new infestations OR as a follow-up to applications of herbicide. Pull plants carefully then shake earth off the roots and leave to wither and die off. Alternatively dispose of carefully to landfill in black plastic bags.

Herbicide Methods

Herbicides can be applied in four different ways depending on the height of the plants and the size of the infestation.

- For smaller trees/shrubs, cut down and paste stumps: leave 5cm of stump and paste with a herbicide gel, e.g. Vigilant or glyphosate product at rate of 10mls/0.5L
- For larger trees, side-cut the trunks and inject: use an axe or machete to make downward cuts into trunks, right round the trunk, ensuring cuts overlap (i.e. ringbark). Apply glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) or triclopyr/picloram (e.g. Tordon Gold) based products undiluted.
- For larger trees, carry out basal treatment of the trunk: liberally spray or paint tree trunks from ground level to 0.5m using a triclopyr product, (e.g. Grazon) at rate of 200 ml herbicide/1L diesel (1:5).
- For any size shrubs/trees apply spray to leaves/overall: mix triclopyr/picloram (e.g. Tordon Gold) based products at recommended rate on label and spray to get good cover over plant leaves.

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

Biocontrols

The first release of a biocontrol for Woolly Nightshade, the lace bug *Garaphia decoris*, was made in the Bay of Plenty in December 2010. However this biocontrol is better suited for use where Woolly Nightshade is prevalent rather than for any sporadic growth on the West Coast.

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.