

Darwin's barberry

Berberis darwinii

What does it look like?

Darwin's barberry is a woody evergreen shrub that grows up to 5 metres tall. It has hairy stems with 5 needle sharp prongs below each group of leaves. Its leaves grow up to 3 cm long and are glossy and serrated. The leaves are similar to holly in appearance. Bright yellow/orange flowers (5-7mm in diameter) appear in clusters from July to February, followed by purplish black berries roughly the same size as the flower.

Why is it a problem?

Darwin's barberry is a long lived plant with seeds that are easily dispersed by birds and other vertebrates such as possums. It tolerates moderate to cold temperatures, damp to dry conditions, and can establish in a wide variety of soil types.

It is shade tolerant, salt tolerant, and can successfully establish in areas that are prone to high winds. It can invade disturbed forest, pasture, shrublands and herbfields. Given time, it can permanently alter these habitats, forming dense stands



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Control Methods

Physical control

Grub out (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.

Herbicide control

Stump swab (all year round): glyphosate (200ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L) or picloram gel or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 600 EC (200ml/L). Or,

Cut and squirt (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g/100mm stem diameter). Or,

Spray (spring-autumn): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (25ml/10L).

Cut stumps resprout quickly, and can be hard to kill and seeds will germinate onto bare land. Follow up 6 monthly. Replant bare sites to minimise seeding.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

Biological control

Darwin's barberry seed weevil was released in the Wellington region in 2016. Contact GW for more information.

Related Links

NPPA <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/long-term-pest-management/national-pest-plant-accord/>

Unwanted Organisms <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/long-term-pest-management/handling-unwanted-organisms/>

Biocontrol <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/biosecurity/weed-management/using-biocontrol/>

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/darwins-barberry/>

Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.