

Heather

Ericaceae - *Calluna vulgaris*



What does it look like?

Heather grows to 90cm tall. It has long dark green to brown leaves (1.5-3.5mm long) are in opposite pairs on the stem and overlap in four vertical rows. Bell-shaped, pink to pale purple flowers (2-4mm long) on narrow, leafy, elongated, upright clusters (2-9cm long) appear from December to March and are followed by tiny, round, hairy seed capsules.

Why is it a problem?

The plant forms dense stands, suckers and seeds profusely, and is faster growing than its subalpine competitors. It tolerates cold, high to low rainfall, semi-shade, and poor soils, but is intolerant of heavy shade. Suckers are spread in soil and seed is spread by wind, water and soil movement. Heather is capable of rapidly forming dense stands in low-growing habitats in shrubland, short tussockland, herbfield, bare land, montane wetlands, and riverbeds. As a result, heather can prevent the establishment of native species.

Control methods

Chemical control:

- Stump swab: metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g) + glyphosate (100ml) per L water or picloram gel.
- Spray (active spring growth only): 2,4-D butyl ester (50ml/10L).

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

More information

Suckers resprout and seeds germinate into bared areas, so avoid soil disturbance. Exclude livestock. Sites amongst taller regeneration may often be left for natural succession. Begin control at roadsides and bare margins to minimise spread. Follow up annually until eliminated.

Notify Council

We would like to know if you've come across any heather in the wild, especially on Stewart Island/Rakiura. Please report any sightings to Environment Southland.

Management programme

- Progressive containment
- Unwanted organism
- National Pest Plant Accord
- Site-led programme
- Organisms of interest

Summary of rules

- No person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any Heather.
For full rules please see Sections 52 and 53 of the [Biosecurity Act 1993](#).
- **Stewart Island/Rakiura Only:**
You can not possess, keep, hold, enclose or otherwise harbour Heather on Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within the site-led area (see map).
You cannot take Heather to Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within the site-led area (see map).
For full rules please see the [Southland Regional Pest Management Plan](#) (Rule 25).
- **Stewart Island/Rakiura Only:**
If you detect or suspect the presence on Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within site led area of Heather, you must immediately report its presence and location to Environment Southland.
For full rules please see the [Southland Regional Pest Management Plan](#) (Rule 26).
- No person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any Heather.
For full rules please see Sections 52 and 53 of the [Biosecurity Act 1993](#).

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