

Spindle tree

Euonymus europaeus

What does it look like?

Japanese spindle tree is a deciduous shrub or small tree to 6m tall with smooth, grey bark and young branches that are square, green and smooth. Paired oval leaves (2-10 cm) with pointed tips, margins with shallow rounded teeth, and 6-12mm leaf stalks usually turn red in autumn.

Flower buds are greenish and usually 4-angled. Clusters of 2-15 flowers (8-10 mm diameter) with four narrow and widely separated greenish-yellow petals appear from November and December, followed (March to May) by 4-lobed, deep pink seed capsules that ripen to expose bright orange flesh covering each seed.



Why is it a problem?

Spindle trees can tolerate a wide range of conditions including shade, warm and cold temperatures, wind, poor soils and moderate to low rainfall. It is poisonous so is not grazed by stock. It will form dense thickets on open spaces, blocking and shading other plants.

Produces many seeds which germinate freely and are spread widely by birds, and sprouts (suckers) from its root system.



Control Methods

Physical Control

Pull out all small plants (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.

Herbicide control

Cut down and paint stump (all year round): glyphosate (200ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or triclopyr 120g/L (500ml/L). Or,

Spray (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 600 EC (30ml/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 120g/L (15ml/L).

Plants with seed must be buried deeply, burnt, or disposed of at a refuse transfer station. Follow up at six-monthly intervals to complete eradication. Cut stumps resprout, so ongoing followup is required to ensure eradication.

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

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Related Links

T.E.R.R.A.I.N <http://www.terrain.net.nz/friends-of-te-henui-group/weeds-by-scientific-names/euonymus-europaeus-european-spindle.html>

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

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.