

Barberry

Berberis glaucocarpa

What does it look like?

Common barberry is an evergreen or semi-deciduous, spiny, yellow-wooded shrub to 4-5 m (occasionally 7m) tall. Stems are tough and woody, with yellowish-grey bark and tough, very sharp, single or three pronged spines (to 23 mm long) where the leaves meet the stem.

It's leathery leaves (25-75 x 10-25 mm) are variably-shaped, usually spiny-serrate and often turn reddish in autumn.

Barberry produces clusters (up to 6 cm long) of smelly yellow flowers (5-7 mm diameter) from October to November and are followed from March to May by oval, reddish-black berries (7-12 mm) with a dusty white look to them and dark red juice.



Why is it a problem?

Common barberry produces long-lived, well-dispersed seeds. Tolerates hot to cool temperatures, damp to dry conditions, high wind, salt, little shade, damage (not grazed) and many soil types. It is known to replace native species.

Birds and possibly possums eat berries and spread the seeds. Occasionally spread by soil and water movement. Farm hedges, roadsides, old homesteads, and plantation forest are seed sources. Barberry is variable in seeding habit, some plants produce a lot of viable seed, others little or none.



Control Methods

Herbicide control

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

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

Injection method: drill holes sloping into the sapwood at regular intervals around the tree and apply glyphosate (250ml/L) into holes. Or,

Spray (spring-autumn only): glyphosate (150ml/15L (knapsack) or (1L/100L (spraygun) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (7.5g/15L (knapsack) or 35g/100L (spraygun) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (90ml/15L (knapsack) or 500ml/100L (spraygun).

Cut stumps resprout quickly, and can be hard to kill. Seed will reinvade bare areas so avoid non-selective spray use. Poor competitor for space, can be crowded out by planting more suitable natives. Follow up.

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.

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

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