

Thorn apple

Solanaceae (Nightshade family) - *Datura stramonium*



What does it look like?

This is a nightshade plant that is an erect, annual herb that grows up to 2m tall with foul scent. It has smooth green-reddish stout stems. Leaves are broad, large, thin, and dark-green (up to 30 cm length x 20cm width), toothed, and alternated. The plant has distinctive green egg-shaped fruit (capsules) (3-5cm long x 2-3cm wide) covered by long spines. When fruit splits after ripening they form into 4 valves that reveal many brown and black kidney-shaped poisonous seeds (2-3mm length). Flowers are trumpet-shaped, white, rarely light purple, and grow to 10cm in length.

Most commonly spotted: Flowers from November to April.

Why is it a problem?

Thorn apple is a highly poisonous production pest plant. Commonly spread by contaminated machinery, soil, and stock. Can reduce crop yields affecting production output.

Control methods

Dig up or pull smaller plants, leave on site to rot. (Use gloves and wash hands thoroughly after handling).

For agrichemical advice contact your Council (Biosecurity Officers).

More information

Similar species: Other invasive species with similar burs within the East Coast/Tairāwhiti Region are Burdock and Noogoora bur.

There are no known native plant species with a similar appearance.

Management programme

- Sustained Control
- National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)

Rules

- Council will work with landowner/occupier, including developing agreements for the effective management of this pest to protect the values of specific sites.

For more information about this Rule, refer to our Regional Pest Management Plan page 35, under Related Links.

- All occupiers shall on a complaints basis, and unless otherwise agreed between the neighbours and Council staff, destroy this pest plant on their land within 50m of a boundary with an adjacent property within 21 calendar days of being notified of the presence of the pest, where the adjacent land occupier is controlling these pests on their land.