

Japanese spindle tree

Euonymus japonicus

Family

Celastraceae (spindle tree) family

Also known as

Japanese laurel

Where is it originally from?

Japan, China and Korea

What does it look like?

Hairless, evergreen shrub or small tree to 7 m tall with much branched stems. Round or slightly 4-ribbed twigs are usually smooth but wrinkle when dry. Glossy, ovalish, finely toothed leaves (25-70 mm long) are in opposite pairs along stems. Usually grown as a variegated yellow-leaved cultivar, but all seedlings revert to the green form. Greenish flowers are insignificant and in clusters of 5-many. Fleshy, round, pink seed capsules (6-10 mm diameter) are 4-celled with orange to red flesh surrounding seeds.

Are there any similar species?

Euonymus europaeus is similar. Many native species are similar, but none have fine-toothed leaf margins or pink seed capsules.

Why is it weedy?

Produces many, well dispersed seeds. Tolerates shade, wind, salt, poor soils, hot to cool temperatures, and high to moderate rainfall.

How does it spread?

Birds and possibly possums, and occasionally by soil and water movement. Common seed sources are gardens, parks, and roadsides. It is a garden escape species that is commonly cultivated, but because wild plants revert to a green-leaved form, they are often not recognised as seedlings of the yellow-leaved parents.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense stands in open or shade, preventing the establishment of native plant seedlings.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed bush and shrubland, coastal shrub and bare land, inshore islands, pohutukawa forest, forest margins, and cliffs.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Pull out all small plants (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. 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).
3. Spray (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 600 EC (30ml/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 120g/L (15ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Reseeds in bared sites and cut stumps resprout, so ongoing followup is required to ensure eradication.



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