

Chinese privet

Ligustrum sinense

Family

Oleaceae (olive)

Where is it originally from?

Temperate and tropical regions, China

What does it look like?

Shrub or small tree (<5+ m), evergreen or semi-deciduous in cold districts with distinctive warty lumps on stems and densely hairy shoots. Oval, dull green leaves (25-60 x 12-25 mm) occasionally have wavy edges. Loose drooping clusters (<10 cm long) of small, tubular and very fragrant white flowers with tiny mauve anthers (Jul-Mar) are followed by round, green berries that mature to dull purplish-black.

Are there any similar species?

Ligustrum ovalifolium and putaputaweta.

Why is it weedy?

Produces many high-viability seeds in widely dispersed berries, and forms dense stands. Tolerates dense shade (although flowers in moderate light), frost, damage, grazing, most soil types, high to moderately low temperatures, damp and drought conditions, salt and wind. Short-lived but continuously replaced.

How does it spread?

Seed is spread by many bird species, as well as vegetation dumping and soil movement. Common seed sources are domestic and farm hedges, roadsides, wastelands, quarries, gullies, and exotic plantations.

What damage does it do?

Dense stands prevent the establishment of native plant seedlings and displace vulnerable native shrub species. Poisonous berries may possibly impact on native fauna, especially insects.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Forest margins, heavily disturbed bush, shrublands, open stream and alluvial river systems, fernland, rocklands, cliffs, coastal and estuarine areas, and inshore islands.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Pull or dig seedlings (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Stump swab (all year round): glyphosate (250ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L + penetrant).
3. Bore and fill (all year round): Bore 1 hole per 20 cm of trunk circumference, and saturate with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (mixed to slurry).
4. Frilling: Make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the trunk base (do not ringbark it), and saturate cuts with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant).
5. Injection method: Drill sloping holes into sapwood at regular intervals around the tree and fill holes with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted).
6. Spray (spring-autumn): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Untreated stumps resprout quickly. Bared areas reseed profusely. Follow up 6-monthly, easiest to spot during spring flowering. Replant bared areas to minimise seedling growth.



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Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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