

Himalayan honeysuckle

Leycesteria formosa

Family

Caprifoliaceae (honeysuckle)

Where is it originally from?

Himalayas

What does it look like?

Deciduous or semi-evergreen, many-stemmed perennial shrub (<2+ m) with straight, hairless round stems (1-2 cm thick) that are hollow and green when young but become woody. Heart-shaped (occasionally 5-9 lobed) leaves (4-14 x 2-8 cm) are in opposite pairs on the stem. Terminal, drooping spikes (3-8 cm long) of white funnel-shaped flowers (15 mm long) with delicate deep reddish-purple bracts (Dec-May) are followed by juicy, dark brownish-purple berries (7-10 mm diameter).

Why is it weedy?

Few seeds produced are well dispersed by birds and water, and new plants quickly form dense thickets. Colonises light wells, slips and other gaps, quickly replacing native species that are trying to establish and causing invasion by other exotic species, especially vines by getting rid of native competition. Tolerates moderate to deep shade, frost, damage, damp, and most soils. Not long-lived, so eventually succeeded by other species.

How does it spread?

Birds and water disperse seeds. Common seed sources include plantation forest, roadsides, disturbed bush, and under hedges.

What damage does it do?

Colonises light wells, slips and other gaps, quickly replacing native pioneer species. Causes invasion by other exotic species, especially vines.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Wet forest, shrublands and margins, streamsides, damp gullies, and possibly areas that would usually be dominated by epiphytes.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut down and paint stump (all year round): or glyphosate (100ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g/L) or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or triclopyr 120g/L (500ml/L).
3. Spray (spring-summer): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L) or triclopyr 600 EC (30ml/10L) or triclopyr 120g/L (15ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stumps resprout so frequent followup required to ensure eradication. Remove pigs and other stock to minimise erosion and the development of light wells. Replant sites where native species are slow to recover to prevent reseeding.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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