

Licorice plant

Helichrysum petiolare

What does it look like?

Licorice plant, sometimes called *Helichrysum*, is a scrambling, evergreen perennial shrub.

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network describes the leaves as 2-3 cm long, ovate-deltate in shape, densely hairy, and either grey or greenish yellow in colour (Webb et al 1995). Flowers are very small, and cream or yellowish. The plant does have a faint licorice fragrance.

This plant is tolerant of a range of climatic extremes from drought to mild frosts. It best suits hot, sunny environments - mild lowland or coastal areas, with sun to partial shade and well drained soil as it is susceptible to root rot.

Why is it a problem?

Licorice plant is a garden escapee that naturalised in the early 1990's.

The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network note that it has been found in a wide variety of habitats, from sand dunes to peat bog margins and in waterlogged soils. This plant is tolerant of a range of climatic extremes from drought to mild frosts. It best suits hot, sunny environments - mild lowland or coastal areas, with sun to partial shade and well drained soil as it is susceptible to root rot.

Once established it is very competitive, even in indigenous shrubland. It grows from wind dispersed seed, layering and/or vegetative spread from garden refuse dumps.



Control Methods

Physical control

Dig out smaller plants year round, dispose of material at refuse transfer station - fragments may regrow.

Herbicide control

Stump swab: picloram gel, or treat smaller cut stems using a spray bottle containing a 5% concentration of either metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L.

Cut stems can be left on site but out of moist conditions to prevent regrowth. Seed collection only matters when there is a small amount in remote locations.

Spray large infestations (spring-summer): knapsack spray with triclopyr 600 EC (60ml/10L + penetrant at label rate). It is important to fully cover the leaves with spray as they have a velvety texture which the spray needs to get past.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.