

Evergreen Buckthorn

Rhamnus alaternus



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Family

Rhamnaceae (buckthorn) family

Also known as

rhamnus, evergreen buckthorn, Italian buckthorn

Where is it originally from?

Mediterranean region

What does it look like?

Evergreen shrub or tree (often multi-stemmed) to 2-3 m tall (occasionally to 15 m, or as short as 60-100 cm in exposed sites) with hairy, angular, purplish shoots. Ovalish, leathery leaves (15-60 x 10-30 mm) are glossy above, entire or toothed sharply or blunt along the edges. Plants are either male or female, with small, green, petal-less fragrant flowers (3-4 mm diameter) produced from May to November, followed by many showy, glossy berries (5-7 mm long) ripening from dark red to black from December to January.

Are there any similar species?

Similar to many native species, especially *Coprosma*, *Pittosporum*, and *Myrsine*.

Why is it weedy?

Quick growing, long-lived, forms dense stands and produces many viable, long-lived and well dispersed seeds. Tolerant to salt, wind, poor soils, frost and heat, damage and grazing, and seedlings also tolerate deep shade. Grows quickly when a light gap appears.

How does it spread?

Birds, soil movement and dumped vegetation. Old hedges and gardens are common seed sources.

What damage does it do?

Forms dense stands and prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings. Acts as a low shrub on windswept rocky shores or understorey shrub in tall canopy.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Coastal and other shrublands, cliffs, forest margins, inshore and offshore islands, and rocky lands.

What can I do to get rid of it?

Control female plants first to minimise seeding.

1. Pull or dig small plants (all year round). Leave on site to rot down.
2. Cut down and paint stump (all year round): triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or triclopyr 120g/L (500ml/L) or Tordon Brushkiller (100ml/L) or glyphosate (250ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (10g + 20ml penetrant / L).
3. Cut and squirt (all year round): Make 1 cut every 50 mm around the trunk and apply triclopyr 600 EC (10ml) or Tordon Brushkiller (10ml) to each cut.
4. Spray (spring-summer): triclopyr 600 EC (20ml/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 120g/L (10ml/L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Bared sites reinfested by seed bank. Stumps resprout. Remove all browsing pests. Follow up sites 6 monthly until eradicated before replanting.

