

WEED OF THE MONTH - Tobacco Bush

Tobacco Bush

Solanum mauritianum

Common Names

Tobacco Bush, Biek' Staf, Tree Tobacco Woolly Nightshade, Kerosene Plant, Bug Berry

Family

Solanaceae

Origin

South America

Description

A large shrubby tree, reaching up to 5m tall with light coloured and hairy stems. Leaves are large (up to 40cm), oval shaped with a pointed tip, grey/green in colour with a very hairy underside. Purple flowers are star shaped (20mm across) and emerge in dense clusters at the end of branches. These give way to hairy, rounded, solid green berries that mature to a yellow colour. Berries contain many small seeds.

How do they spread?

Spread by seed, often dispersed by birds.

Why are they an issue?

Well adapted to most environments and conditions. Tobacco Bush is often one of the first species to emerge in disturbed ground, known as 'pioneer species'. Plants mature and reproduce quickly and chemically inhibit the growth of other species. Reduces habitat and out competes native plants.

Where are they likely to occur?

Island wide, especially in freshly disturbed soil.

How can I control it?

1. Hand weed small plants.



2. Over spray seedlings 200 mL glyphosate (360 g/L) per 10 L of water.
3. Cut stump or injection method with 1 part per 1.5 parts of water.
4. Basal Bark application with 600 mL Garlon to 20 litres of diesel.

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