

Large-leaved Privet – *Ligustrum lucidum*

Introduction

Privet, a member of the Olive Family (Oleaceae), is a native of China and Japan that was introduced to the Beechmont District in the early 1900's as a windbreak tree. Privet is a particularly invasive weed species on the Beechmont Plateau as it prefers moist, nutrient rich soils. Due to the favourable conditions on the Beechmont Plateau, Privet has a high capacity to spread and out-compete native vegetation and it has become dominant on many roadside reserves, along watercourses, in disturbed rainforest and in regrowth situations. Dense thickets can reduce the diversity of food sources and disrupt native animals from their normal access through natural corridors. Privet is also known to exacerbate conditions such as hay fever. Privet is a Class Three Declared Weed under the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002.

Description

Privet is a woody shrub or small tree growing to a height of ten metres and a canopy width of five metres. The dark green leaves (pale underneath) are simple, elliptic to ovate and arranged oppositely on the stems. The leaves can be up to 12 cm long and 5.5 cm wide, and have a pointed tip. The stems and branches are characterised by the presence of lenticels (small raised corky structures involved in gas exchange).

Privet is easily identified when flowering from late spring to summer. Masses of creamy white, fragrant flowers appear at the terminals of the branches. Thousands of pea-size, blue-black berries follow in late summer and autumn. These seeds germinate readily and are dispersed by birds. Because of the high viability, it is common for there to be thousands of seedlings underneath a mature Privet tree. The seeds can remain viable for one to two years. Seedlings tolerate low light levels.



Privet leaves (note opposite arrangement)



Privet in flower



Privet seeds



Privet stem (note the lenticels)



Privet seedling invasion

Privet invasion maturing

Control Methods

Control methods for Privet take many forms depending on the situation. Cut and swab, stem injection, basal bark application, as well as foliar herbicide application for seedlings and small bushes, are the most commonly used methods. Small trees can be mechanically removed.

Beechmont District Landcare Association has equipment for members to borrow for stem injection and / or basal bark treatment of Privets (and other weeds) on their property. For further details on methods of control, the herbicides to use and for borrowing equipment, contact:

Craig Perkins: 55333307

Pat Fitzgerald: 55331442

Please note: Basal bark treatment is not effective on small-leaved Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*).

Alternatives to Privet

Alternative native rainforest species that can be used for windbreaks and hedges include:

- Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*)
- Deep Yellowwood (*Rhodosphaera rhodanthema*)
- Hard Quandong (*Elaeocarpus obovatus*)
- Malletwood or Silver Myrtle (*Rhodamnia argentea*)
- Scrub or Brush Cherry (*Syzygium australe*)
- Blue Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium oleosum*)
- Native Olive (*Olea paniculata*)
- Guoia (*Guoia semiglauca*)
- Tulipwood (*Harpulia pendula*)

Best results are obtained by planting a mixture of the above species. Virtually any other local rainforest species can be included to bolster the hedge or windbreak effect, and to increase biodiversity and habitat values. Our local rainforest "Laurels" (Family *Lauraceae*) should also be included in any plantings, because their seeds provide food for birds, and along with many other local species, they are the logical preference to Privet and Beechmont's other highly invasive weed trees: the Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) and Chinese Celtis (*Celtis sinensis*). (Refer to BDLA's comprehensive list of "Indigenous Trees, Shrubs, Palms, Palm Lilies and Treeferns" for Beechmont and Lower Beechmont (October 2007)).

In some cases Privet can be performing a desirable function, eg. a windbreak, and there is an understandable reluctance to remove it. In this case, local native species suggested above can be planted close to the Privet and encouraged to grow. Over time the Privet can be reduced through pruning and eventual removal to allow the native species to dominate and take over.

While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Beechmont District Landcare Association does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.