

Small-leaf privet

Ligustrum sinense



Small-leaf privet has been widely distributed in Australia as a garden hedge plant. Its berries are eaten by birds, aiding its dispersal. In natural systems, the densely branched growth habit of this weed poses a significant shading threat to native plants in moist, temperate areas of South East Queensland. Over time, this exclusion of native plants may be detrimental to native animals. Stands of this weed may also grow sufficiently thick to hinder animal movement through the bushland. Small-leaf privet produces masses of heavily-scented white flowers that cause severe allergic reactions in susceptible people.

Legal requirements

Small-leaf privet is a category 3 restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be given away, sold, or released into the environment. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO). This fact sheet gives examples of how you can meet your GBO.



Queensland
Government

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on small-leaf privet. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Description

Small-leaf privet is a large shrub that grows up to 4 m high. The finely haired leaves are deep green in colour, oval-shaped and up to 5 cm long. Young branches are often covered in fine hairs like those found on the leaves. Cream-coloured flowers are very small, but produced in dense sprays up to 10 cm long. Berries are produced after the flowers and are dark blue to black in colour.

Life cycle

Small-leaf privet flowers in spring and the fruit ripens in late autumn and winter. Small-leaf privet flowers earlier than broadleaf privet but its fruit can stay on the plant later. As many as 3000 fruits per small stem are set and can amount to over one million seeds per mature tree in open areas in a favourable year.

Methods of spread

Seed is the most common method of dispersal. Fruit-eating birds and rabbits spread seed, as well as the dumping of garden waste, the sale of garden plants, floral arrangements and flowing water. Both species can also produce suckers from underground roots.

Habitat and distribution

Small leaf privet is native to China and Japan. It spreads to a large range of habitats and dominates moist gullies and stream banks, as well as fence lines. It is found along the entire Queensland coastline, preferring the moist, temperate areas of Southern Queensland, especially around Toowoomba.

Control

Managing small-leaf privet

The GBO requires a person to take reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks posed by small-leaf privet. This fact sheet provides information and some options for controlling small-leaf privet.

Physical control

Small plants may be hand-pulled and moist soil will make this task easier. Be careful not to break the tap root or the plant will regrow.

Take care to ensure your own and others safety when trimming or lopping small-leaf privet near power lines.

For electrical safety information visit worksafe.qld.gov.au/electricalsafety.

Herbicide control

There are no herbicide products specifically registered for the control of small-leaf privet in Queensland. However, a permit allows people generally to use some herbicide products to control small-leaf privet as an environmental weed in various situations.

See Table 1 for the treatment options in situations allowed by the permit.

Prior to using the herbicides listed under this permit (PER11463), you must read or have read to you and understand the conditions of the permit. To obtain a copy of this permit visit apvma.gov.au.

More information

For more information contact your local government or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of small-leaf privet

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Unwanted trees	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Ken-Up Aquatic 360, Touchdown 360 and other formulations)	1 L in 1 L water For other formulations (consult label)	Cut stump Apply to plants 0–30 cm in diameter.
		Use undiluted For other formulations (consult label)	Stem injection 0–25 cm basal diameter 1 mL per 2 cm cut 25–60 cm basal diameter 2 mL per 2 cm cut
Home gardens	Triclopyr 50 g/L (e.g. Tree & Blackberry Killer, various brands)	100 mL + 100 mL kerosene	Basal bark plants to 10 cm diameter. Cut stump for plants from 5 cm diameter (consult label).
Agricultural non-crop areas, commercial and industrial areas, forests, pastures and rights-of-way	Triclopyr 600 g/L (e.g. Triclopyr 600, various brands)	5 L/60 L diesel	Basal bark plants to 10 cm diameter. Cut stump plants up to and in excess of basal bark size. Treat at any time of year.
Commercial and industrial situations, rights-of-way, pastures and forests	Triclopyr 750 g/L (e.g. Hurricane Ultimate 750)	800 mL/12 L diesel	Basal bark plants up to 10 cm diameter, cut stump for larger plants. Treat at any time of year.
Non-agricultural areas, domestic and public service areas, commercial and industrial areas, bushland/native forests, roadsides, rights-of-way, vacant lots, wastelands, dunal and coastal areas	Triclopyr 240 g/L + Picloram 120 g/L (e.g. Access)	1 L product in 60 L diesel	Either paint stump immediately after cutting, or paint or spray basal bark. APVMA permit PER11463 (permit expires 30/06/2023)
Native pastures, commercial and industrial areas and rights-of-way	Metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (e.g. Associate, Ken-Met 600 WG)	10 g per 100 L water plus wetting agent	High volume foliar spray Apply to bushes up to 3 m high Complete spray coverage is essential DO NOT spray when plants are stressed
Non-agricultural areas (native pastures) commercial and industrial areas and rights-of-way	Aminopyralid 375 g/L + Metsulfuron-methyl 300 g/L (e.g. Stinger)	20 g/100 L water	High volume foliar spray. Apply to bushes up to 3 m high. Complete coverage is essential, partial coverage will result in regrowth
Native pastures, rights-of-way, commercial and industrial areas	Triclopyr 75 g/L + Metsulfuron-methyl 28 g/L (e.g. Zelam Brush Weed)	250 mL/100 L water	High volume foliar spray. Thorough coverage is essential for good control; partial coverage will result in regrowth. Do not spray when bushes are stressed

Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

