

Chocolate Vine

Akebia quinata

**Progressive Control Plant under the
West Coast Regional Pest Plant
Management Strategy**



National Pest Plant Accord Status

Chocolate Vine, also known as 'Akebia,' is listed in the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand. For more information refer to the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand website at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa

Where has Chocolate Vine come from?

Chocolate Vine is native to Central China, Korea and Japan and was brought to New Zealand originally as an ornamental garden vine. It has naturalised well here, having escaped from home gardens, and is now a problem in some parts of the country. With only a few plants known on the West Coast it should be possible to eradicate this pest plant here.

What does Chocolate Vine look like?

Chocolate Vine is a fast growing, deciduous, twining vine or groundcover. It may remain green all year round in mild climate conditions. The many stems are slender and green when young, brown when mature. Each leaf is made up of five oval leaflets (to 3cm), each creating a 'hand-shape' on a long stalk. Leaf colour changes during growth from green with a purplish tinge to blue-green at maturity.

The vanilla scented flowers, 2.5cm in diameter, are chocolate - purple in colour and hang in 5-10cm long clusters of 6-8 flowers from August to October. These develop into purple-violet coloured seed pods 8-9cm long with whitish seed pulp containing many tiny black seeds.

Chocolate Vine has been spread in New Zealand by both deliberate and accidental plantings of stem fragments which take root readily (vegetative dispersal) and through birds eating the fruit (seed dispersal).

Why is Chocolate Vine a Pest Plant?

Chocolate Vine grows rapidly into a dense tangled mat which can overwhelm existing plants and suppress the growth of new ones. Along bush margins it prevents seed germination and the establishment of new native plants.

While Chocolate Vine can tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions (full sun or shade, drought or frosts) it prefers partial shade on well drained, but moist soils on bush or road margins and beside streams, river and wetlands. This type of habitat is found throughout the coastal lowland parts of the West Coast making them vulnerable to infestation by this pest plant.

Top right: Chocolate Vine [C Lewis, Weedbusters]

At right: Flower and seedpod detail [T James, EW]



What are the best methods of control?

Information regarding methods for control of Chocolate Vine is scant. If you have used other methods to deal with this plant successfully please contact the WCRC Weedbusters Co-ordinator.

Some infestations in other parts of New Zealand have occurred from careless dumping of pruned Chocolate Vine material, i.e. they have established re-vegetatively. All care should be taken therefore when disposing of any prunings.

Manual Methods

Dig out small vines and any seedlings at any time of the year, taking care to get all the roots. Dispose of in black garbage bags to a lined landfill. Do not compost or leave lying where they can take root again. Follow this up regularly until no more seedlings come up then re-plant with preferred species.

For larger plants cut the vine stems off at ground level, and repeat when they re-grow. Tie off hanging vines in the canopy so they cannot touch the ground and re-vegetate. Once growth has died back, dig out root systems and dispose of carefully to lined landfill. Repeat the process until all signs of re-growth have gone.

Herbicide Methods

Very large vines which have already suppressed other wanted species can be dealt with by spraying during spring-summer. Repeat sprayings may be necessary. Suitable knapsack spray mixes are:

- glyphosate based products (e.g. Roundup, Glyphosate 360, Watkins Weedkiller) at 300ml/15L water
- triclopyr based products (e.g. Grazon) at 60ml/10L water + penetrant

For personal safety please use all herbicides as per manufacturer's labelling

Biocontrols

There are no known biological controls for Chocolate Vine at present.

Where can I get more help?

For further information call either of the Regional Weedbusters Co-ordinators. They are:

Mary Traves: Environmental Information Officer, West Coast Regional Council (768 0466 or 0508 800 118)

Tom Belton: Technical Support Officer Biosecurity & Weeds, Department of Conservation, West Coast - Tai Poutini Conservancy, Hokitika (03 756 9100)



www.weedbusters.org.nz

The West Coast Regional Council does not accept liability for any advice given on this sheet regarding application of herbicides for pest plant control. The brand names listed imply neither endorsement of those brands, nor criticism of any other brands not listed.