



DESCRIPTION

Barberry is a shrub around 2-3 metres tall. It was originally used as a hedge plant, and is therefore found through most of New Zealand, although it prefers higher rainfall locations.

It is semi-deciduous, woody, evergreen, and armed with very sharp spines that appear singly or in a sinister 3-pronged configuration. The leaves are mid-green in colour, roughly oval-shaped, up to 75mm long, and have spiny-toothed edges.

Barberry flowers in mid to late spring, producing clusters of small, yellow flowers with an unpleasant smell.

Flowering is followed by the appearance of small purplish berries with a white-yellow bloom.

Barberry seeds are spread by birds, and the plant does best in areas where the terrain makes access for control more difficult, and where grazing by stock is less intensive. Although not as invasive as some weed trees and shrubs, Barberry is nevertheless capable of eating into productive grazing land from the adjacent forest margins, or by spreading out from isolated locations such as old house sites, orchards and hedges. In more sheltered sites (scrub, forest margins, etc) it is much more invasive.

Barberry is in many areas subject to local authority regulations which require its control at least in some situations.

There are some similar species, including Darwin's Barberry and the European Barberry. The Darwin's Barberry is evergreen, with bright yellow/orange flowers and smaller, shiny dark green leaves. The European Barberry is a deciduous variety, dropping its leaves for winter, and is more common in the central South Island. Although less of an issue on farming land than the common Barberry detailed in this Weed File, these other varieties can be controlled by similar means.

Other similar species include Boxthorn and Hawthorn, which will be discussed in separate Weed Files.

MANUAL REMOVAL

Smaller plants can be successfully removed by grubbing-out, and can then be left on-site to rot down. This can be done at any time of the year.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Cut & Stump Paint

- **MSF600** at 5g/L
- **Grassmate** at 100ml/L
- **Triclo** at 200ml/L

This works year-round. Cut the plant off as low to the ground as possible, and liberally coat the stump with the herbicide mixture immediately after cutting, to ensure optimum herbicide penetration before the cut 'heals'.

Trunk Inject

In very large barberry specimens, drill a series of 10mm holes angled down into the lower trunk, and fill with any of the concentrated herbicide solutions recommended above for the Cut & Paint method. You can also ringbark with downwards angled cuts, and fill the cuts with the concentrated herbicide solution. The tree will die standing. Removal of lower branches will allow better access to control other weeds, and also encourages subsequent grass growth under the dying tree.

Spot Treatment

- **Buckshot** granules applied dry at 55g per square metre sprinkled around the base of the plant and out to the drip line. The plant is then left to die standing. This is an excellent 'target-of-opportunity' treatment when carried on the bike or ute. Not suitable for larger specimens.

Spraying

Optimum time to spray is summer to autumn. This is the preferred method of control for heavy infestations of Barberry.

- **GrassMate** at 6ml/L by knapsack (i.e. 90ml in a 15L knapsack)
Add **SuperWetter** organosilicone penetrant at 15ml/15L.
- **MSF600** at 5g/10L by handgun, plus 10ml **SuperWetter** penetrant.

Ensure thorough spray coverage of all parts of the plant. If possible spray from all sides.

The preferred herbicide for spraying is **MSF600** as it gives the best control with least regrowth. **GrassMate** is effective, and is grass-friendly, but more expensive.

