

WEED FILE:

PERIWINKLE



DESCRIPTION

Periwinkle : *Vinca major*

Periwinkle is a 'ground cover' style plant, and in NZ originally escaped from gardens. It originates from the Mediterranean region.

The plant is a low, scrambling evergreen perennial. It forms dense mats of vegetation on long-running stems. The ground cover is so dense that it smothers out native plants and prevents regeneration of those species.

Periwinkle is subject to Pest Plant Management Strategies in some regions, which means that you are required to control it and in some cases to report it. Check with your local authority.

The plant can reach to 50cm height. The leaves are dark glossy green, leathery to the touch, and are up to 10cm long by 7cm wide. Leaves grow in opposite pairs on short stalks off the main stems, which can be 2 metres in length.

Flowers are distinctive, with five petals that fuse together near the tubular centre. They're blue-violet in colour, white at the centre, and about 5cm in diameter. Periwinkle generally flowers in summer.

The root system consists of short shallow rhizomes at the nodes of the running stems. This root system allows the plant to spread quickly and aggressively.

Periwinkle is common throughout NZ. It will tolerate full sun or semi-shade, most soil types, salt, wet or drought conditions, heat or cold, and can survive heavy damage or grazing. It most frequently appears in waste areas, roadsides, disturbed bush, streamsides, and in gardens.



CONTROL – GENERAL

Periwinkle is very difficult to eradicate once established, and any control method will require patience and repeat control efforts over 2-3 years.

PHYSICAL CONTROL

Very small infestation sites can be dug out. All plant material must be removed from the site and disposed of in a refuse transfer station, or burnt. Check for regrowth!

Mowing with a lawnmower on a very low setting can work on suitable sites. Mow 3-4 times a year, and grub out all regrowth after each mowing. This will take 2+ years of attentive work.

On small sites where spraying is not desirable, smothering with weed mat or black plastic can be effective. Cover for 6-12 months, then hand remove any surviving plants.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

- **Spray** year-round with 1g *MSF600* + 200ml *Glyphosate 360* (or 90g *Granny*) plus 5ml *SuperWetter* per 10L water, avoiding overspray into the drip line of adjacent desirable plants. Respray 2-3 times a year, for three years.
- **Spray** spring and autumn with 20ml *Glyphosate 360* + 1ml *SuperWetter* per litre of water (or 9g *Granny*/L + 1ml *SuperWetter*). Follow up each treatment on re-sprouting survivors with *Glyphosate* at 30ml/L (or *Granny* at 14g/L) plus the *SuperWetter*. This option allows closer spraying to the dripline of desirable plants. Repeat for 3 years.
- **Weed Wipe** where practical using 500ml *Glyphosate 360* (or 225g *Granny*) + 2ml *SuperWetter* per litre of water. Repeat as regrowth dictates.