

# WOOLLY NIGHTSHADE

*Solanum mauritianum*



WOOLLY NIGHTSHADE SEEDLING



MATURE WOOLLY NIGHTSHADE WITH FLOWERS

Woolly nightshade forms dense stands that shade out any native plants and threatens their survival. The fruits are attractive to birds, spreading seed over large areas through their droppings. The hairs can trigger allergic reactions.

Also known as tobacco weed, flannel-leaf or kerosene plant, woolly nightshade is a shrub or small tree originally from South America and brought into NZ as an ornamental plant that quickly escaped gardens.

It is a major problem in Kaipātiki and other areas as it thrives in urban reserves and gardens where it can spread easily.

To help native plant life flourish, as well as help human health and wellbeing, removal of woolly nightshade is advised

## Features of woolly nightshade



- Flowers are purple with yellow centers
- Flowers are arranged in clusters
- Tree itself can grow up to 10m tall



- Flowers turn into yellowish berries
- Berries contain large numbers of seeds



- Leaves greyish-green on top, whitish beneath
- Leaves and stem covered in dense felt-like hairs
- Smells like kerosene when crushed

# WOOLLY NIGHTSHADE

## Manual Control

### For seedlings and smaller plants:

- Pull or dig out roots
- Leave on the ground in sunlight to die or hang off the ground until it dries out

### For larger trees or those with berries:

- Remove all berries/fruit and dispose of in household waste or bury deeply (at least 50cm)
- Cut stem at ground level and cover with thick black polythene to exclude all light; cover polythene and entire root zone with a layer of mulch at least 15cm deep for 12 months
- Deadhead flowers before fruiting/seeding to avoid seed set and dispersal

## Herbicide Control

- Cut stem at ground level and paint stump with 1-2mm layer double strength glyphosate gel\*, ensuring rim of stump is pasted
- *OR* scrape the trunk with a saw, with long 30cm length scrapes; Paint the scraped area with double strength glyphosate gel\* (Picloram\* can also be used but carries greater risks to non-target organisms)

## Important

- **Handling of woolly nightshade:** to a minimum or wear protective clothing, as hairs on the leaves and stems can detach and can be an irritant to eyes, throat or skin.
- **\*For all herbicides:** Read all labels thoroughly; Follow instructions and safety advice; Avoid contact with skin and eyes; Apply sparingly, only in dry weather conditions; Avoid dripping onto soil or using herbicide near waterways.

## Habitat and Distribution

- Woolly nightshade grows in a wide range of habitats, open scrubland and forest, roadsides, field margins and urban/residential areas.
- It has adapted to a wide range of habitats, in full sun and semi-shade environments.

## Method of Spread

- Once berries are ripe, seeds are dispersed by birds eating them and excreting the seed.
- Seeds can also fall on the floor around the parent plant creating a dense stand.

## Life Cycle

- Woolly nightshade flowers in warmer months, but can be year round.
- Seed production is copious in these plants, and requires a period of dormancy at differing temperatures to germinate.
- Seeds can lie dormant in the soil for 20-30 years after dropping from the tree.

## Further Information

To prevent infestation and reseeding, DO NOT dispose of woolly nightshade fruit/seeds in your compost, or in garden waste bins. Please dispose of woolly nightshade berries to landfill or bury at least 50cm deep. Foliage can be composted or placed in regular garden waste bins.

If you have questions, want assistance, or want to borrow weeding resources, email [pestplants@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz](mailto:pestplants@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz)

For more information on pest plants including disposal, visit [www.pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz/pest-plant-resources](http://www.pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz/pest-plant-resources)

