Buddleja davidii

COMMON NAMES
buddleia

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Deciduous (occasionally semi-evergreen) open, multi-stemmed shrub to 3+ m tall. Stems bluntly angled, clad in tufts of easily-removed soft woolly hair (tomentos when young), becoming lax when long. Leaves willow-shaped, 6-20 x 3-8 cm, thin, usually hairless above, white or grey tomentose below, finely toothed. Flowerhead a distinctive, dense, cone-shaped panicle 30 x 5 cm with many flowers; each 5 mm diam, fragrant, purple or white, orange inside, Dec- Feb. Seed capsule 5-10 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
Is very similar vegetatively to other Buddleja species, but can be easily separated by the distinctive cone-shaped flowerheads when flowering.

HABITAT
Terrestrial. Occurs in Lowland sites with low-moderate fertility (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Colonises new, coarse-textured, nitrogen deficient surfaces (Smale 1990). Colonises stable habitats (Kay & Smale 1990). Thrives on free-draining pumice soils of the central north island (Mike Harre, pers comm.) Found in scrub and forest margins, cliffs, bluffs and riverbeds (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Colonises alluvial sites (Smale 1990).Very invasive of forest margins and revegetation areas (Porteus 1993). The plant is invasive of waste spaces, river beds and plantation forests especially following land disturbance i.e. forest harvesting (Golden Bay Gazette, 27/12/96).

GENUS
Buddleja

FAMILY
Buddlejaceae

AUTHORITY
Buddleja davidii Franch.

FLOWERING
December, January, February, March, April

YEAR NATURALISED
1946

Silverstream, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

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ORIGIN
China

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Ornamental.

TOLERANCES
Highly tolerant to drought, intolerant to shade (Seedlings require high light)and slightly tolerant to poor drainage. Wide range of soil conditions (grows on almost raw lava in NZ), frost to -15 deg C (regenerates if cut down by frost). Regrows vigorously from cut stumps.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Perennial. The plant reproduces vegetatively through regeneration from suckers (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Can survive burial to 0.5m of fine alluvium by producing adventitious roots and shoots on buried or flattened stems (Smale 1990). Seed is produced in vast amounts (Smale 1990; Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Approx 3 million on an average plant (Patterson, per comm.) Seed viability is initially high (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Seed is dispersed by wind and water (Smale 1990; Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)
This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report here.

NVS CODE
BUDDAV

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/buddleja-davidii/

PDF DATE
27 May 2026