Rubus fruticosus agg.

COMMON NAMES
blackberry

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS
Red/Pink, White



Stokes Valley. Dec 2001. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Licence: CC BY.



Taita Gorge, Hutt River. Mar 2004. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Scrambling shrub, suckering, usu. semi-erect with stems arching and entangling, sometimes semi-prostrate or almost erect; stems usu. angled, flat to concave or furrowed between angles, rarely terete, sometimes striate, glabrous to moderately hairy, esp. on young growth, often with subsessile glands; sometimes pruinose, with stalked glands, green to purplish, red or flecked; armature of prickles, and sometimes also pricklets or acicles. Leaves palmate with 5 leaflets; petioles and petiolules usu. pilose to tomentose and prickly; leaflets glabrous to pilose on upper surface, usu. pilose or tomentose on lower surface, dentate to 1~2-serrate or sometimes obscurely lobed or deeply 1~2-pinnatisect; terminal leaflets usu. obovate or ovate, sometimes elliptic, oblong, orbicular or deltoid, 30~160 x 15~110mm, petiolulate; stipules usu. linear or linear-lanceolate, sometimes lanceolate to elliptic. Infl. a cylindric to pyramidal, usu. many-flowered panicle, often leafy at least in lower part, sometimes flowers 1~few, with stalked glands. Flowers 15~60mm diam. Sepals usu. lanceolate to ovate or ovate-triangular, acute and apiculate to acuminate or long-attenuate and sometimes leafy at tip, pilose to tomentose, sometimes with pricklets or stalked glands, usu. deflexed or rarely erect at fruiting. Petals rounded to notched, flat or crinkled, white to deep pink. Stamen filaments white or pink. Fruit of black, shiny or rarely pruinose drupelets, ovoid, oblong or cylindric, 10~15mm long. (-Webb et. al., 1988)

SIMILAR TAXA
A scrambling, extremely thorny shrub, semi-erect with stems arching and entangled (Webb et. al. 1988). A deciduous plant. A suckering (running) plant. Stems grow up to 8m long. The black and shiny fruit (Webb et. al. 1988) is edible. The fruit is a berry, 1-3cm in diameter, that consists of many fleshy segments. The white flowers, or pink flowers occur in groups (Bay of Plenty Regional Council n.d.) and are 2-3cm in diameter with 5 petals. The leaves are usually in leaflets of 5, with toothed, spines on the lower-side of the mid-rib. The leaves are dark green with a lighter underside.

HABITAT
Terrestrial. A plant of coastal and lowland habitats. A plant that grows where there has been settlement or significant disturbance of native flora (Webb et. al. 1988). Usually prevalent on lightly grazed areas and waste land in moist situations especially higher rainfall areas. A plant that does not compete successfully with well managed good pasture. A plant of scrub and forest margins, shrubland, fernland, riverbeds and wetlands (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). A plant of open areas, wasteland, roadsides, hedgerows, farmland, scrub, forest margins and clearings, riverbeds, gardens, embankments and swamps (Webb et. al. 1988). Areas at risk from the plant are pasture, exotic forests, open areas, roadsides, sand dunes, pasture, streambanks. A plant of roadsides, streambanks, waste areas, pastures, orchards and forestry.

GENUS
Rubus

FAMILY
Rosaceae

AUTHORITY
Rubus fruticosus L. agg.

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November, December, January, February, March, (May)

FRUITING
November-May

YEAR NATURALISED
1867

ORIGIN
Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Agricultural

TOLERANCES
The plant is partially tolerant to shade and poor drainage. The plant resprouts as a result of physical damage and grazing. A plant that prefers high rainfall areas. Requires medium to high soil fertility (Atkinson 1997).

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Perennial. Seeds germinate in spring, but the percentage of germination is low. Stems usually live for 2-3 years. New plants are formed from suckers from a partially buried regenerative crown. Stems will root when they touch the ground. A plant that has the ability to develop roots on the tips of first year stems and form daughter plants where they touch the ground, when the connecting stem from the parent plant dies in autumn. Clumps increase when daughter plants develop on first year stems and when lateral roots sucker up to 2 metres from clumps. Viability of the seed in the seed bank is unknown (Wotherspoon 1996). Seed is dispersed by birds, floodwaters, water, soil movement and animals. Seed is spread for some distance by creeks and rivers but more importantly by birds which relish the succulent fruit and can distribute seeds over a wide area.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
rubus: From the Latin meaning bramble

NVS CODE
RUBFRU

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rubus-fruticosus-agg/

PDF DATE
27 May 2026