

# Solanum dulcamara

## COMMON NAME

bittersweet

## FAMILY

Solanaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Solanum dulcamara* L.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## NVS CODE

SOLDUL

## HABITAT

Terrestrial.

## FEATURES

Unarmed, scrambling or sprawling perennial. Stems are usually hairless, with prominent raised lenticels; to 4 m long. Becoming woody towards the base. The leaves are ovate or broadly ovate, sometimes with up to 4 basal lobes or leaflets, which can be densely hairy, and a sharp leaf tip. Flowers are present as a flat or convex-topped inflorescence, or as loose panicles with 10-25 flowers present. The calyx is 2-3 mm long, divided nearly to the base with very shallow, hairy broadly triangular lobes. Flowers are purple, though sometimes white, and are narrow-triangular in shape, becoming recurved. Flowering occurs Nov-Mar. Characterised by bright scarlet shining almost ovoid berries, which contain seeds 2-3 mm diam.

## FLOWERING

November, December, January, February, March

## FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

## YEAR NATURALISED

1924

## ORIGIN

Eurasia, N Afr

## ETYMOLOGY

**solanum:** Derivation uncertain - possibly from the Latin word sol, meaning "sun," referring to its status as a plant of the sun. Another possibility is that the root was solare, meaning "to soothe," or solamen, meaning "a comfort," which would refer to the soothing effects of the plant upon ingestion.

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental.

## POISONOUS PLANT:

The scarlet coloured berries of this plant are poisonous when eaten.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/solanum-dulcamara/>



Bittersweet. Photographer: John Barkla



*Solanum dulcamara*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth