

Solanum dulcamara

COMMON NAMES

bittersweet

FAMILY

Solanaceae

AUTHORITY

Solanum dulcamara L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

SOLDUL

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental.



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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.

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](#).

POISONOUS PLANT

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

17 September 2024