

Euonymus europaeus

COMMON NAMES

spindle tree, spindleberry

FAMILY

Celastraceae

AUTHORITY

Euonymus europaeus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

EUOEUR

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Much-branched glabrous, deciduous shrub or small tree up to 6m high. Bark grey & smooth. Twigs green, quadrangular, smooth, not winged. Leaves opposite, ovate-lanceolate to elliptic, acute or acuminate, crenate, usually turning red in autumn, 2–10cm long; petiole 6–12mm long. Cymes 2–15-flowered, pedunculate, dichotomous. Buds greenish, usually 4-angled; flowers usually 4-merous, 8–10mm diam.; petals greenish-yellow, generally oblong, widely separated. Capsule 4-lobed, deep pink, exposing the bright orange aril after opening. (- Webb et. al., 1988)

FLOWERING

November, December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

March to May

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Long-lived seed bank - more than a year (Carol West, pers. comm.). The species is gynodioecious (2 sexual morphs: 1 strictly female and the other, termed male, producing some seed) with both sexes established in wild populations (Webb et al., 1988). Birds (ibid.).

YEAR NATURALISED

1958

ORIGIN

Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental



Lake Roxburgh. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Queenstown. Apr 2006. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

ETYMOLOGY

euonymus: One possible explanation is this genus is named after Euonyme, the mother of the Furies (vengeance deities in Greek mythology) because of the irritating properties of this plant. Another explanation is that the name is simply from the Greek eu 'good' and onoma 'name', meaning 'a name of good repute'.

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

All parts of this tree are poisonous including the pink fruits with orange seed.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/euonymus-europaeus/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024