Broad-leaf pepper tree

Schinus terebinthifolius

Broad-leaf pepper tree is a deciduous shrub or tree from South America. It has been commonly grown in Australia as an ornamental plant and has now naturalised in subtropical areas of Australia. Common in southeastern Queensland and increasingly found in northeastern NSW.

Distribution

In northern NSW, isolated Broad-leaf pepper trees (BLPT) are found in the Tweed, Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Ballina, Lismore, west of Casino, at Saphire Beach near Coffs Harbour, Sawtell, Nambucca Heads and Taree areas. It has great potential to spread further in NSW.

It has been reported as spreading in national parks and nature reserves in the Tweed region, and in nature reserves in Lismore. Isolated pockets of the tree are also suspected to be present further south in coastal NSW. BLPT occurs on council land, parks, reserves, roadsides and private property. Most infestations found can be traced back to mature, cultivated trees.

Description

BLPT is a sprawling shrub or erect tree, usually 6-10m, but can be up to 15m high.

It has three leaflets, 3-6cm long and 2-5cm wide. Leaves and fruits smell peppery when crushed.

The fruit is globe-shaped, 5-6mm wide, and initially green, turning red when ripe.

Flower petals are white to cream with five sepals and five petals about 2mm long, and inflorescences in leaf axils towards the end of branches. Flowers appear all year round; the main flush appears in autumn and a smaller flush in spring. Male and female flowers are on separate trees.

Habitat

BLPT is a serious environmental weed. It rapidly colonises disturbed bushland and dominates understorey vegetation.

It out-competes and replaces native grasses, ground covers and shrubs, and is shade tolerant. It spreads rapidly on waterlogged or poorly drained soils, but will grow on drier land in higher rainfall areas.

BLPT has been found growing in a range of habitats from mangrove forests to coastal sand dunes. Thickets of BLPT also form around water holes, shading out pasture.
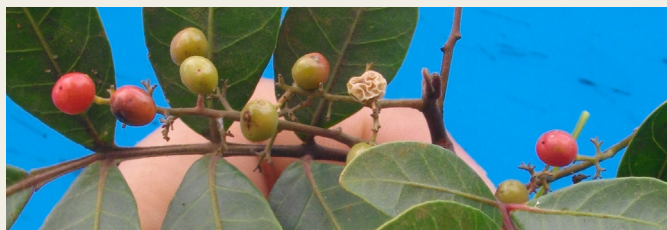
Reproduction and dispersal

BLPT is primarily spread through seed dispersal by birds and mammals. The tree produces bright red berries that are attractive to frugivores, or animals that eat fruit.

It can also reproduce from root suckers.

Seed viability is 30-60% for up to 2 months. This high seed viability combined with effective animal dispersal contributes to its invasive nature.

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Broad-leaf pepper tree *Schinus terebinthifolius*

(Photo sources: Rous County Council.)

Declaration

Regional priority weed objective: Containment

These weeds are widely distributed in some parts of the State. While broadscale elimination is not practicable, minimisation of the biosecurity risk posed by these weeds is reasonably practicable.

Control

If you have seen, or think you have seen, BLPT please contact Rous County Council on (02) 6623 3800 for a positive identification and advice on control.

Sites should be monitored so that regrowth can be controlled.

Chemical control

Vigilant II® (active ingredients: Picloram 44.7 g/kg + Aminopyralid 4.47 g/L)
Undiluted.
Cut stump application. Apply a 3-5mm layer of gel for stems less than 20mm. Apply 5mm layer on stems above 20mm.
No withholding period.

Starane™ Advanced (active ingredients: Fluroxypyr 333g/L)
21ml per 1L of diesel.
Basal bark application.
7-day withholding period.

Starane™ Advanced (active ingredients: Fluroxypyr 333g/L)
300ml per 100L of water.
Foliar spray application.
7-day withholding period.

Roundup® (active ingredients: Glyphosate 360g/L)
1-part glyphosate to 50-parts water.
Spray seedlings and coppice shoots.
No withholding period.

Non-chemical control

Physical removal is an option, however always treat the remaining stump.

For further information contact:
Rous County Council
02 6623 3800

www.rous.nsw.gov.au

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