

Heather

(Calluna vulgaris)

Is Heather on your property?

Heather is included in Horizon's Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy as a Containment plant. This means that within a defined control area the pest plant species will be controlled wherever it is found. The focus of control is placed where infestations are low or where the pest plant in question poses a high risk. If you see any sites where it is growing or can help with details of the plant, please contact us on free phone 0508 800 800.



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Identification

Tough, bushy, evergreen shrub to 90cm tall. Stems woody and wiry appearance, young shoots densely hairy, becoming hairless. Leaves opposite, overlap in 4 vertical rows, 1.5 - 3.5 mm long, dark green turning brown. Flowers bell-shaped, pink to pale purple, 2-4 mm long, on narrow, leafy racemes, 2-9 cm long, Dec-Mar. Seed capsules tiny, round, hairy.

Weedy characteristics

Suckering habit, forms dense stands, seeds profusely. Tolerates cold, high to low rainfall, semi shade, poor soils. Faster growing than subalpine competitors. Intolerant of heavy shade.

Methods of dispersal

Suckers. Seed via wind, water and soil movement. People removing seed containing plant material to gardens, road graders and other vehicles spreading seed along roadsides.

Impact on indigenous plants

Forms dense stands in low-growing habitats, prevents recruitment. Spreads rapidly, replaces plant communities with monoculture.

Typical habitats

Scrubland, short tussock land, herb-field, bare land, montane wetlands, riverbeds. Mostly in colder, subalpine areas, acid soils.

Control

1. Ensure heather beetle is present if possible.
2. Stump swab: 1 g Escort + 100 ml glyphosate /L water.
3. Spray: Escort at 35gm/100 litres of water. Spring-early summer.

Site management

Avoid soil disturbance. Exclude livestock. Sites amongst taller regeneration may often be left for natural succession. Begin control at roadsides and bare margins to minimise spread. Follow up annually until eliminated.

Species recovery

Suckers resprout. Reseeds into bared areas.

For more information freephone 0508 800 800.

