

Pest of the month – Climbing Spindleberry (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

Climbing spindleberry is a vigorous climber capable of growing to 12m or higher on trees. It is distinguished by its autumn floral display of bright yellow leaves and yellow/red fruit on the female vines.

A deciduous native of Korea, China and Japan and eastern Asia, spindleberry is more cold-tolerant than most other climbers and has invaded native areas throughout the Taupo - Tongariro area and pine forests in the Bay of Plenty. It is an aggressive invader of young forest, shrubland and bush margins, capable of smothering the host plants, causing canopy collapse and forming impenetrable thickets. Birds can rapidly disperse its seeds to new areas and it has the ability to establish and grow rapidly in heavily shaded situations.

Spindleberry has been identified at a

number of sites in the Tasman - Nelson region, including Golden Bay (Paynes Ford, Ligar Bay, Bainham, Upper Takaka and Takaka), Riwaka, Motueka and Nelson City. These sites have been mapped and the vines treated. However, these vines have vigorous and persistent root systems, making them difficult to control. A methodical treatment with good follow-up is required.

Council believes that it can eradicate spindleberry, which has been included as a Total Control pest in the Regional Pest Management Strategy. Council biosecurity officers are working closely with landowners and DoC staff to achieve eradication. If you think you have seen the plant in your neighbourhood, please call your local Council office, leave your contact details, and a biosecurity officer will call you back.



Climbing Spindleberry.