

Chilean mayten

Botanical name: Maytenus boaria

Family: Celastraceae (bittersweet family)

Identification

- Evergreen tree growing up to 10 metres, often producing suckers
- Weeping growth habit
- Leaves are apple-green, finely serrated, hairless and long (up to 5cm)
- Leaves are arranged alternately along the stems and have almost no stalk
- Clusters of tiny green flowers occur where the leaf joins the branch, appearing in spring
- Female flowers produce a small capsule with orange-red oily flesh inside, and 1 or 2 small seeds inside that.



Why is it a problem?

Seeds are bird dispersed. Seedlings are able to grow rapidly in relatively undisturbed areas and under dense shade.

Chilean mayten suckers from the roots, eventually forming dense colonies of stems. The plants are tall and long lived.

Status

Chilean mayten is often grown as an ornamental tree in New Zealand, but is now found in the wild. Although it is not an official plant pest and has no legal control requirements, in some situations its weed potential is very high.

Control

Application of a herbicide is necessary as merely cutting the plant produces a mass of root suckers.

We are interested in receiving reports of any plants and whether they are ornamental or growing wild, to assess what level of control (if any) is warranted. Please email weeds@ecan.govt.nz.

