

Sycamore

Acer pseudoplatanus



Family Aceraceae

Identification

- Tree up to 25 m tall.
- The 'maple-like' leaves drop off in winter.
- Each leaf is 5-lobed and is attached to the stem by a reddish leaf stalk.
- Clusters of many small hanging flowers appear in spring; the same time the leaves emerge.
- Winged 'helicopter-like' seeds hang in clusters.



Sycamore leaf. Photo: A. Paltridge (DOC).



Sycamore winged seeds. Photo: K. McCombs.

Where is it found?

Sycamore is commonly grown as an ornamental species and can be found nationwide. It readily invades disturbed and regenerating forest, short tussockland, shrubland, waste sites, road-sides and near waterways.

Why is it a problem?

Sycamore is a long-lived species that is able to grow in a wide range of conditions. Each tree produces many seeds over its lifetime and these seeds are well adapted to being wind-dispersed. Seedlings are shade tolerant and can form dense stands in shady conditions. These stands can prevent desirable species from establishing. Sycamore can also spread into areas of native bush.

Status

Sycamore is listed in the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (2005-2015) as a 'biodiversity pest' that is to be controlled in targeted areas.

Control

Seedlings can be pulled out by hand. Trees can be cut and stump painted immediately with an appropriate herbicide, as left untreated, stumps will re-sprout. Large areas can be sprayed at full leaf stage only. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Dense stand of sycamore seedlings. Photo: C. Howell (DOC).