

# Tradescantia

## *Tradescantia fluminensis*

Family Commelinaceae



### Identification

- Perennial, creeping groundcover.
- Each glossy, oval, dark green leaf has a pointed tip and is arranged alternately along the stem.
- The fleshy stems can break easily.
- Clusters of small, white, 3-petaled flowers may appear from December to June.
- No fruit or seed is produced in New Zealand.



Tradescantia. Photo: C. Lewis.



Tradescantia flowers and leaves. Photo: Plant Protection Society.

### Where is it found?

Tradescantia prefers to grow in moist shady conditions. It can be found growing in lowland disturbed forest, shrublands, along waterways, grazed areas, waste places and in private gardens.

### Why is it a problem?

Tradescantia grows quickly forming dense mats that can smother other plants and can takeover gardens and reserves. It is also seen as a serious threat to native bush systems where it can prevent the regeneration of native seedlings.

Tradescantia is easily spread via the movement of broken stem fragments. A creeping stem can also take root when a node (the part of the stem the leaf grows from) touches the ground.

It may cause dermatitis in animals.

### Control

Small areas of tradescantia can be raked and rolled up like a carpet. This should be carried out in dry conditions and work should start from the outside, moving towards the centre. The material must be disposed off at an appropriate landfill—do not compost tradescantia.

Alternatively, a herbicide can be applied. Herbicides with the active ingredient triclopyr have proven to be reasonably effective. To determine the most appropriate herbicide to use, contact either your local gardening centre, agri-chemical supplier or the current agri-chemical manual for chemical advice. When using herbicides always use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways. Whatever method is used, regular control (at two or three month intervals) will be needed until no new growth is found.



Tradescantia growing as an invasive groundcover. Photo: Unknown.