

# Barberry

*Berberis glaucocarpa*



## Identification

- Woody, evergreen or semi-deciduous shrub
- Grows 2-3 m tall
- Produces many small, yellow, drooping flowers up to 6 cm long from October to November
- Small, purplish, oblong berries, 7-12 mm long, with a white bloom can be found between March and May
- Main stems have yellowish-grey bark with sharp spines, that are single or three-pronged, up to 2 cm long



Flowering barberry. Photo: Plant Protection Society.



Barberry fruit. Photo: C. Howell (DOC).

## Control

Seedlings can be carefully pulled out. Other methods include cutting the stump as close to the ground as possible and painting with an appropriate herbicide, or drilling a series of 10 mm holes in the trunk and filling these with glyphosate herbicide, ringbarking and painting herbicide on the cuts or cutting down and removing the whole tree. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with plants, the soil and waterways.

## Status

*Berberis glaucocarpa* is listed in the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005-2015 under the restricted plant pest programme. This means it is prohibited from sale, propagation and distribution within Canterbury as it is known to be a problem here and elsewhere in New Zealand.

## Where is it found?

Common barberry is originally from the western Himalayas. Used as a hedging plant in many parts of New Zealand, it has spread from these types of situations and established itself in areas such as wasteland, scrub and forest margins. It is especially difficult to manage on broken or hilly ground where intense stock-grazing (for controlling seedlings) is harder to achieve. Barberry is locally common in some higher rainfall, lowland areas in the North Island and the northern half of the South Island.

## Why is it a problem?

Common barberry lives for a long time, producing long-lasting, well-dispersed seeds. It is able to tolerate damp to dry conditions, high wind, salt, a range of climates, many soil types and is unpalatable to stock. If left unchecked in sensitive, open habitats, it can replace native species.



Barberry flowering. Photo: C. Howell (DOC).