

Periwinkle

Vinca major



Identification

- Trailing or climbing stems of up to 1 m
- Glossy dark green leaves are 2 to 3 cm long, opposite each other along the stem (variegated plants have white and green leaves)
- Violet/blue flowers 2 to 5 cm diameter



Periwinkle flowers Photo: C. Howell (DOC)



Periwinkle flower and leaf Photo: Jon Sullivan

Where is it found?

Periwinkle grows in a range of environments including lowland and coastal forests where there are light gaps, shrub lands, rock lands, alluvial flats, roadsides, quarries, wastelands and home gardens

Why is it a problem?

Periwinkle forms a thick smothering blanket, so it is a threat to restoration projects and the natural regeneration of native seedlings. Periwinkle tolerates light shading, most soils, wet or drought conditions, hot and cold temperatures, heavy damage and grazing. It tends to be long-lived once it has established. While periwinkle does produce seed, its main mode of dispersal is via humans spreading plant fragments by dumping of garden waste

Control

Small plants can be dug out. Take care to remove all roots. Larger infestations can be sprayed with an appropriate herbicide or mowed using a very low setting; both spraying and mowing require frequent regrowth follow up over two to three years. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways. Alternatively try weed matting the infestation for at least six months, ensuring that no creeping stems escape into the sunlight.

Disposal

Do not mulch. Dispose of plant material at a refuse station, compost, deep bury or burn.



Periwinkle smothering native seedlings Photo: R. McCaw (ECan)