

Darwin's barberry

Berberis darwinii

Family Berberidaceae (barberry)



Identification

- **Evergreen** (or semi-deciduous) shrub up to 4 m tall.
- **'Holly'-shaped** leaves are glossy dark green on the top and pale underneath.
- 5-pronged spines extend out where the leaves join the stem.
- The wood inside the stems is **yellow**.
- **Orange flowers** hang in drooping clusters from July - February.
- **Purple/black berries** follow flowering.



Darwin's barberry fruit. Photo: A. Paltridge (DOC).



Darwin's barberry leaves and fruit. Top photo: K. McCombs. Lower photo: A. Paltridge (DOC).

Where is it found?

Darwin's barberry has jumped the garden fence to invade shrubland, regenerating forests, forest margins and agricultural land.

Why is it a problem?

Darwin's barberry is an aggressive, fast-growing and long lived species. This species can survive in a wide range of conditions, even tolerating low light levels. Once established, Darwin's barberry can prevent native plants from regenerating beneath it. Birds spread the berries to places where it can be difficult to control.

Status

Darwin's barberry has been declared an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993, which makes it illegal to knowingly release or spread, display or sell, breed, propagate or otherwise distribute this species.

We are interested in sightings of Darwin's barberry if seen north of the Rakaia River. Please report all sightings of Darwin's barberry to a DOC biodiversity ranger on (03) 341 9100 or email weeds@ecan.govt.nz.



Darwin's barberry. Photo: A. Paltridge (DOC).