



SEPTEMBER 2008

## *Lonicera japonica* Japanese Honeysuckle

Japanese Honeysuckle is a hardy, highly invasive, evergreen climber that can reach heights of 10 m. The fruit is poisonous and the leaves toxic. Removal is laborious. Follow-up monitoring of the site is essential.

### DESCRIPTION

Japanese Honeysuckle is a multi-stemmed, twining, climbing shrub with bright green oval leaves and blossoms from late spring-autumn. The stems are red and downy when young; older stems become woody with a flaky bark. Its leaves are oval, smooth-edged with prominent veins and grow opposite one another. The flowers are strongly scented and grow in pairs near branch tips. They are white/cream, often purplish on the outside, turning yellow as they age. The fruit is a shiny black berry 6-10 mm diameter, maturing summer-autumn. Roots are initially fibrous becoming woody, branching and developing a thickened crown.

### EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Japanese Honeysuckle tolerates almost all soils, grows in sun, part sun, frost, drought and salt. It forms large mats across the ground and can climb to 10 m. It eliminates ground flora and smothers shrubs and trees. The stems branch continuously and a single stem can grow as much as 15 m annually. The root system is fibrous, extensive, develops woody crowns and a tap root depth of 100 cm. Reproduction is via seed, stem rooting, and stem fragments.

### HABITAT

Japanese Honeysuckle thrives in moist, fertile conditions but once established can tolerate extended dry spells. It invades a variety of habitats such as forest, heathland, woodland, and warm temperate rainforest. Infestations usually begin along bushland margins, often as garden escapees.



Leaves and flowers of Japanese Honeysuckle.  
Source: Sutherland Shire Council

## ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION

Japanese Honeysuckle is a native of Japan and China. It is present in all areas of Australia except the Northern Territory. Japanese Honeysuckle has been available in nurseries and can still be found at markets and is exchanged between gardeners. It is commonly found in bushland close to houses where it has either escaped from gardens or been illegally dumped with garden cuttings.

## DECLARATION

Japanese Honeysuckle is considered an environmental weed in Sutherland Shire. However, it is still important that environmental weeds be destroyed, as they can also affect human health, or can be invasive in the natural environment killing the native flora and reducing the natural biodiversity. Native animals may also be affected due to the damage of their natural habitat.

## Control

- **Seedlings** can be hand-pulled.
- **Small infestations** can be manually removed. Ensure all crowns and rooting stems are traced back, lifted and removed. The site should be thoroughly checked for fragments following clearing.
- **Plants** can be treated using the Cut and Paint method. Apply over the warmer months but avoid hot, dry periods.

- **Large climbing stems** can be treated using the Drill and Fill or Stem/Scrape methods. Apply over the warmer months but avoid hot, dry periods. Apply Drill and Fill treatments to the base of the thickened stems or directly into woody crowns.

- **Herbicides:** plants can be sprayed with non-selective or selective herbicides. Consult council staff for further information.

- **Large infestations:** manual removal is extremely laborious and results in considerable soil disturbance. These stands are best treated with other methods.



Japanese Honeysuckle smothering a tree.  
Source: Sutherland Shire Council

For further information contact  
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