



Ligustrum sinense **SMALL LEAF PRIVET**

SEPTEMBER 2008

There are two forms of privet located right along the coast of New South Wales. They are the Large Leaf and Small Leaf Privet. The Small Leaf is the most abundant and dense of the two varieties.

DESCRIPTION

Small Leaf Privet is a large shrub, very different to its close relative in appearance as it has smaller leaves and only grows up to 6 metres high. The leaves are opposite, mid to dark green in colour around 4 cm long with transparent veins. During spring small white/yellow flowers appear in scattered clusters throughout the plant. The fruit ripens in winter as dense drooping bunches of tiny purple/black berries.

EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The plant is able to germinate easily and grow prolifically, giving it the ability to suppress and shade other plants living in the understorey. The complex and tenacious root system chokes the soil, reducing the availability of water and nutrients for competing native species.

When the roots or stems are damaged or cut, suckering occurs giving the plant the ability to increase its size and density.

Both species of privet can trigger reactions in people who suffer from allergies.

HABITAT

Small Leaf Privet has the ability to survive in most environments and soils. However maximum growth occurs in moisture and nutrient rich soils. It is found abundantly along gullies, watercourses, wastelands, creek lines and banks in urban areas.



Fruits and leaves of Small Leaf Privet.
Source: Sutherland Shire Council

ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION

Originating in Asia, the Small Leaf Privet plant was a popular ornamental as a hedgerow and as a windbreak. The species arrived in Australia through nursery stock. The feeding of birds on the succulent berries assisted further dispersion into bushland areas. Large numbers of Currawongs are known to feed readily on the berries of the Small Leaf Privet.

DECLARATION

Small Leaf Privet 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 loss of their natural habitat.

CONTROL

Small Leaf Privet is not easily eradicated, as it is tolerant of heavy shade, ringbarking and burning. Privet has the ability to re-grow through suckering when the stems or roots are cut. Removal of small plants can be achieved by digging out the entire plant. Alternatively the plants can be scraped and painted with undiluted Glyphosate. Wait for plant to defoliate and remove above ground parts.



Small white/yellow flowers appear in scattered clusters.

Source: Sutherland Shire Council

For further information contact
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