



Darwin's barberry

Why is it a pest?

Darwin's barberry is a woody evergreen shrub (named after the naturalist Charles Darwin). It is a long-living plant which is invasive in a wide range of New Zealand landscapes.

Under the right conditions, it can quickly form thick clumps of plants and grow faster than native species, allowing it to take over wherever it establishes.

Darwin's barberry tolerates moderate-to-cold temperatures, damp-to-dry conditions, high wind, salt, shade, damage, grazing and a range of soils. It can take over farmland, disturbed forest, canopy (upper layer of the forest), shrubland, tussock land, roadsides and other areas lightly covered by plant life.

The fruit is delicious, and birds and pests eat it, meaning Darwin's barberry is easily spread. Seeds can also be spread through soil and water movements.



What does it look like?

- **Size:** An evergreen, spiny, yellow-wooded shrub less than 4 metres tall with thick, hairy stems.
- **Leaves:** Hairless, glossy, dark green leaves with tough, five-pronged, needle-sharp spines.
- **Flowers:** Hanging clusters of deep orange-yellow flowers followed by oval purplish-black berries with a bluish-white surface.
- **Root system:** Can facilitate both sexual and asexual reproduction, and plants can regenerate from root suckers and layering.
- **Habitat:** Includes pasture, disturbed forest, shrubland, tussock land, roadsides and areas with little plant growth.

Common name:

Darwin's barberry

Scientific name:

Berberis darwinii

Management programme:

Site-led

Site-led programmes have rules for specific pests that only apply in that area. Site-led areas have special biodiversity and other values to protect.

When can I spot it best?

Darwin's barberry flowers from winter to the end of summer (July to February). If stems are broken or cut, its wood has a distinctive yellow colour.

What are the rules?

To prevent or improve on damage to indigenous ecosystems, Darwin's barberry is in the site-led programme of the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan (2019-2029).

The Dunedin site-led areas include West Harbour — Mt Cargill, Quarantine and Goat islands — and Otago Peninsula. There are no specific rules associated with site-led pest plants in the plan.

Darwin's barberry is declared an unwanted organism in the National Pest Plant Accord. This means it cannot be sold or be in a place where plants are being sold. It cannot be propagated, bred, multiplied, communicated, released, caused to be released, or otherwise spread.



How will we achieve that?

ORC will take a lead role in supporting the goals of community groups and agencies in site-led areas in relation to Darwin's barberry. This may be through advice, education, funding, service delivery or requiring other landowners to undertake control when needed.

What should I do?

Physical control:

- Grub out small plants and leave on site to rot.
- Follow up six monthly, as stumps will resprout quickly and can be hard to kill. Replant bare sites with native plants to minimise seeding.

Chemical control:

- Cut the stump near the ground and paste it with a suitable herbicide gel, such as Tordon BK, containing either metsulfuron, triclopyr or glyphosate.
- Spray foliage when the plant is actively growing using triclopyr, picloram and penetrant.

Caution: when using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed. **Disclaimer:** mention of product trade names does not endorse these products nor imply criticism of similar products not mentioned. The Otago Regional Council does not give any warranty that the information is accurate or complete or that it is suitable for all circumstances.

For more information, visit orc.govt.nz/darwinsbarberry

