

Blue Periwinkle *Vinca major*

Environmental Weed Factsheet

Origin: Sth Europe & North Africa

Size: Trailing ground cover

Best removal time: October-January

Flowers: May – January



What it does...

Blue Periwinkle invades damp to wet areas. Prefers shade but grows in full sun provided conditions are moist the majority of the time. It can completely dominate the understorey.

What it looks like...

Leaves are a broad oval shape 4-8cm long and 1-5cm wide and are opposite each other on the stems and at right angles to those above and below. They are usually a shiny dark green above and paler green below, sometimes variegated. Flowers are 3-5cm across and have 5 lilac-blue petals, flowering from winter to summer. Stems can grow up to a metre in length.

How it spreads...

This plant mainly spreads vegetatively with little or no seed dispersal. Stems grow up and arch over, taking root as they touch the soil. Leaf nodes will also take root. The plant eventually forms a dense mat that smothers native vegetation and then prevents any new native plants from growing.

Plants are dispersed through dumping of plants or soil containing parts of stems or roots. It is sold through nurseries, markets and fetes. Buyer beware!

How to remove it...



Remove by Hand: Small infestations can be forked which is best done when the soil is moist, usually following rain. Ensure that all roots and stems are removed, otherwise the plant will continue to grow. Dispose of plant material carefully as it spreads very easily.



Spray with herbicide: Generally plants should be in an active growing stage and not be under any stress. Slashing the area in winter - early spring and then spraying the regrowth can increase the chance of success and reduce the amount of chemical required. Adding surfactants may improve the effectiveness of some herbicides. Many herbicides can only be applied by a registered chemical user.

Please contact the Yarra Ranges Council's Environment Department on 1300 368 333 for more information on weed removal techniques, support and training available and details of active community groups in your area.

Indigenous alternatives to plant...

Many groundcover alternatives exist that are indigenous to the Yarra Ranges region and would make great substitutes for the Blue Periwinkle.



Native Violet,
Viola hederacea



Blue Dampiera,
Dampiera stricta



How to dispose of weeds:

By disposing of environmental weeds correctly you can prevent re-infestation on your property and elsewhere.

- Landfill (Weed Wipeout Tip vouchers available for some species).
- Green waste bin ensures that weeds are not able to spread.
- Woody weed stems can be bundled for green collection twice per annum.
- Composting (excluding seed heads or species with vegetative reproduction, e.g. Wandering Trad).
- Burning in accordance with Council and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) prescribed burning periods and regulations.
- Recovery and transfer stations available for weed tipping are Healesville, Wesburn, Coldstream, Lysterfield and Montrose.

Bare ground attracts WEEDS!!!

For effective long term weed control we recommend:

- **Habitat Restoration**
 - Encourages indigenous and native plant to **regenerate**
 - **Revegetation** - replanting indigenous vegetation
- Productive land **use**.
- **Replace** with non invasive garden species.

Using Chemicals:

Non chemical treatments is often the most effective and safe option especially on smaller scale infestations.

Where chemical use is undertaken:

- Always follow the manufacture's guidelines when using chemicals.
- Wear protective clothing and eyewear
- On purchasing your herbicide, always ask for a Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or refer to the manufacturer's website for specific safety guidelines and information.
- Some herbicides will kill other plants and not just the target species.
- Near waterways herbicides can be very poisonous to aquatic life.
- Use chemicals sparingly and be sure that you are using the right chemical and application technique.
- Ensure the weather conditions are suitable (e.g. minimal wind and no rain expected)
- Apply herbicides at the correct time during the plant's growth cycle so you get the best results..