

Tutsan, sweet amber

Hypericum androsaemum, Hypericaceae



Photos: top left and above W. John; mid and bottom left, A. Stanton.



- perennial semi-evergreen and semi-woody shrub
- forms dense populations preventing native seedling establishment
- can grow in semi-shade under native forest canopy
- grows to 1.5 m tall
- oppositely arranged, oval leaves attach directly to the stem, with no petiole, smell of curry
- all parts of the plant lack hairs
- stems and autumn leaves may be tinged red
- clustered five-petalled yellow flowers have many stamens
- red berries (1 cm) ripen to black - **poisonous**
- numerous, long lived, curved seed are readily spread by birds and other vectors
- roots are fibrous and do not have rhizomes
- pasture weed in NZ since 1955
- originally from Eurasia
- the name tutsan may be derived from 'toute saine', meaning 'all healthy' in French - historically, the plant was used medicinally in various ways, e.g. leaves were applied to wounds

Control: Small infestations of seedlings and young plants can be dug out and left to rot on site. Larger areas may need repeat spraying or cut and pasting of stumps. As always, areas need to be checked for re-growth and re-infestation.