

Woolly Nightshade, Tobacco Weed, Wild Tobacco Tree

Solanum mauritianum, Solanaceae



- small tree 10 m tall
- forms dense plantations
- self pruning leaves form leaf litter which appears to suppress native seedling growth (contains water soluble plant inhibitors)
- large (up to 35 cm long) greyish green hairy/woolly leaves smell strongly of kerosene or capsicum when crushed or rubbed
- hairs brush off easily and can irritate eyes, nose, throat and skin
- produces many clusters of flowers (purple with yellow centres), when only a few months old
- green spherical fruit ripen to a dull yellow
- each fruit contains over a hundred bird dispersed seed
- native to eastern South America



Control: Woolly nightshade seedlings, including the roots, should be pulled out when the soil is damp. Older plants need to be either injected with an appropriate herbicide or cut down and the stumps all painted with a woody herbicide to prevent re-growth. The shade provided by an intact or fully restored native bush ecosystem appears to prevent the establishment of this weed

Photos: bottom left, N. Henderson, WeedFree Trust; remainder, A. Stanton