



Sydney Weeds Committees

- Sydney Central
- Sydney South West
- Sydney North
- Sydney West – Blue Mountains

Weed alert : Kei Apple



Kei apple (pronounced Kye), *Dovyalis caffra*, is a drought and frost hardy shrub or small tree from southern Africa that has become an environmental weed in bushland in western Sydney. It produces yellow fruit the size and colour of small apricots and has formidable thorns along its stems from a young age which can pose a risk of personal injury. Left uncontrolled it has the potential to impact on endangered ecological communities and threatened species by out competing and shading out native plants, restricting the movement of native animals such as wallabies and kangaroos, and harbouring feral animals such as foxes and rabbits.

Description

A shrub or small tree, usually 3-5m, but occasionally to 8m. Leaves are 2-5cm long, 1-3cm wide, dark green with a distinctive waxy lustre, with 3-5 prominent veins on both sides. Young stems have smooth grey bark but older branches and the trunk have fissured and flaky to corky bark. Young branches have a drooping habit and are heavily armed with long spines to 7cm in length. Flowers are small and inconspicuous, flowering in late spring and early summer. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants. Fruit is an edible bright yellow or orange berry 2.5-4cm in diameter.

Distribution

In Sydney Kei apple has been found though a large part of Kemps Creek Nature Reserve and surrounding properties. It is possible it has spread to properties in Austral, Cecil Hills and Kemps Creek. It is also known to occur at Eastern Creek near Blacktown. All these known infestations are the target of a control program with an aim to eradication. It is unknown elsewhere in Sydney. Elsewhere in Australia it is a problem in south eastern Queensland and in South Australia.



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How is it spread?

The fruit is eaten and spread by birds. Young plants often come up under trees or other places birds will perch. Kei apple plants are either male or female with only female plants bearing fruit.

Control Methods

Young plants may be removed by hand, but care should be taken and gloves should be worn to avoid the sharp spines. Larger plants can be cut at ground level and the stump painted with an appropriate glyphosate based herbicide - see the diagram below.

BUSH REGENERATION INFORMATION SHEET

Control of Woody Weeds

Examples of woody weeds include: ● lantana, bitou bush, cotoneaster, privet (cut and paint)
● camphor laurel, Mickey Mouse bush (ochna) and cassia/senna (stem scrape)

METHODS OF REMOVAL

1 CUT AND PAINT—Useful for small to medium sized woody weeds up to 10cm basal diameter

STEP 1 Make a horizontal cut as close to the ground as possible with secateurs, loppers or a bush saw.

STEP 2 Immediately apply herbicide to the exposed flat stump surface.

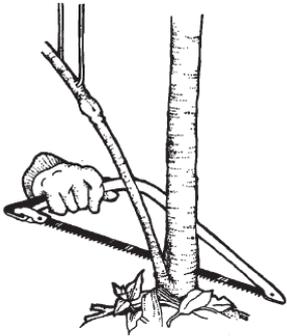
SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

The following general precautions should be made when using herbicides:

- Read the label before opening the container and follow the instructions.
- Wear protective clothing as directed on the label.
- Wash hands after use and before eating or smoking.

considerations

- Cuts should be horizontal to prevent herbicide from running off the stump. Sharp angle cuts are hazardous.
- Herbicide must be applied immediately before the plant cells close and translocation of herbicide ceases.
- If plants resprout, cut and paint the shoots after sufficient regrowth has occurred.
- Stem scraping can be more effective on some woody weeds.



Illustrations: V.Bear

If you should find this plant please contact Peter Ridgeway, Greater Sydney LLS on 0401 481 037 or Peter.Ridgeway@lls.nsw.gov.au

For more information on weeds in Sydney visit the website of the Sydney Weeds Committees

<http://sydneyweeds.org.au>