

Invasive species fact sheet

African Olive

(*Olea europaea* ssp. *cuspidata*)



Why is this plant a problem? African Olive is an aggressive woody weed that invades native bushland, creating a dense shady canopy that excludes the growth of native understory plants. The small black fruits are consumed by birds and spread into bushland areas. African Olive is a very long-lived tree and permanently changes the plant diversity and structure of bushland. Mount Annan summit is now covered in a 20-year-old African Olive forest. Some large eucalypts have managed to stay above the olive invasion.

Where does it come from and why was it introduced?

African Olive is a tropical wild olive that comes from eastern Africa. It is related to the edible European Olive from the Mediterranean, however the fruit is not edible and has no commercial value. African Olive was introduced into Australia as a hedging plant and rootstock for edible olives in the mid-1800s, and has now 'jumped the garden fence' and spread rapidly throughout the Camden-Picton district.

Weed ecology: African Olive thrives on clay soils and grows up to 10 m high. Plants can produce up to 25,000 fruits in one season. Dense seedling 'mats' form underneath mature plants. Mature plants resprout after fire. It is recorded as environmental weed in Hawaii, Norfolk Island and the Hunter Valley, NSW.

How can you control it? 'Cut and paint' application of undiluted herbicide such as Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) to entire stump immediately after cutting. Drill and inject with trees undiluted Glyphosate. Spray seedlings with Methsulfuron-methyl (Brushoff) or Glyphosate spray mix.



Mount Annan Botanic Garden
Australian Plant Garden of Botanic Gardens Trust