

Invasive plants and animals

Wandering jew or Trad

Tradescantia fluminensis



Commelina diffusa



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The problem

Wandering jew (*T. fluminensis*) is a succulent creeping plant native to South America. It is popular in gardens as a groundcover and establishes easily in moist, shady areas. Wandering jew has become a major environmental weed in subtropical and temperate rainforests, particularly along streams and gullies where it spreads quickly and out-competes other native vegetation. Infestations up to 1 m deep have been found in north Queensland rainforests. Wandering jew sends out roots at each nodal point, allowing it to trail over the ground to form a thick carpet-like cover. Wandering jew reproduces via stolons, seeds and tubers.

Description

Wandering jew is a fleshy leaved creeping plant that grows as a ground cover. It has green shiny leaves with noticeable parallel veins, and each leaf has a sheath at the base covered in small hairs. The stems and leaves of the plant are weak and easily broken. Small white three-petaled flowers are produced mainly in spring.

Native wandering jew

A similar looking plant *Commelina diffusa* is native to south-east Queensland. Native Wandering jew has blue flowers (usually flowering in autumn) and a slender tapered leaf, unlike the weedy species *Tradescantia fluminensis* (which has fleshier, rounded, glossier leaves). The native wandering jew is not an environmental weed.

Management strategies

Hand weeding to carefully remove the whole plant including the roots and nodes is effective but labour intensive.

Declaration details

Wandering jew or Trad is not a declared plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, however, plants that are not declared under state legislation may have control requirements imposed by local governments.

Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.

TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF WANDERING JEW

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Foliar spray	fluroxypyr (200 g/L)	1500 mL per 100 L of water	Registered	Young plants up to and including flowering. Some regrowth will usually occur and will require treatment.
Herbicide Gel	picloram (43 g/kg) e.g. Vigilant®	Apply at 16 g/m ² over the foliage using a long handled paint roller or similar.	Registered	Make sure foliage has been completely flattened during application. Avoid splatter. Visible effects apparent in 2–3 months. Picloram can be active in the plant for up to two years. Total plant death may take from six months to two growing seasons after application.

Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.