



Giant Devil's Fig



Young Giant devil's fig plant.



Giant devil's fig establishing in pasture.



Birds spread seed under trees.

Giant devil's fig (*Solanum chrysotrichum*) originated from Central America, and is a class 3 declared noxious weed on the NSW North Coast. A member of the Solanaceae family, it is a tall perennial shrub, three metres to four metres high, with a similar growth habit to wild tobacco.

Flowering from autumn to spring, it reproduces from seed usually spread by birds and bats. It rapidly invades disturbed sites; for instance, where the ground was recently bulldozed.

Features

- The bark is green with many sharp thorns.
- Stems and leaves are covered with soft hairs that are reddish on new growth.
- Stems, leaf stalks and leaf veins have long prickles, 2-6mm long.
- Large leaves have 7-13 lobes that divide the blade about half-way to the midrib. Flowers are star shaped and hairy on the outer surface.
- Globular fruits are yellow to yellowish-orange when mature, and are not very fleshy.

Characteristics

An invasive plant that out-competes native vegetation in its preferred habitat. It has impacts on wildlife through the destruction of natural habitat and reducing availability of natural food sources.

Plant parts are toxic to humans, stock and wildlife.

Used traditionally in Mexico for the treatment of tinea, recent studies have shown it to be effective and five anti-fungal agents have been isolated from the species.

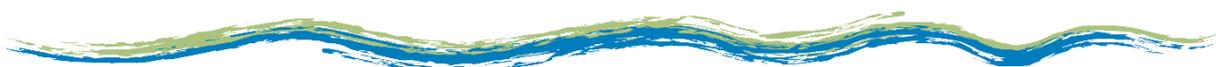
Habitat

Found most commonly along creek banks, waterways, coastal forest and disturbed sites. Giant devil's fig tolerates and survives environmental extremes and grows in a variety of soil types and conditions.

- Over twenty years ago this plant was restricted to one core area. Now it has become establish in most valleys on the NSW North Coast
- Although closely related to wild tobacco, it has larger lobed leaves and nasty-looking thorns on its stems and leaves.
- The flowers and fruit are also similar to those of wild tobacco, though the petals are white.

Many landowners are becoming familiar with this plant after recently discovering it on their land under large established trees or along creek banks.

If you can see any on your property, act immediately to remove them before they mature and set seed.



Control methods

- Hand pull individual plants and small infestations. Care should be taken when handling this plant due to the large, sharp thorns along the stems and branches.
- Established plants are easy to treat, but the legacy they leave with the seed is the problem.
- Control can be achieved by either grubbing out the seedlings or spraying with glyphosate and water 1:100 (10ml/1L) plus surfactant up to half a metre high.
- Shrubs can be cut and swabbed with a rate of 1 litre of glyphosate to 1.5 litres of water. Stem injecting is also possible on mature plants.
- There is an off- label permit 9907 to cover use in areas of native vegetation for the control of noxious and environmental weeds.

