

Have you seen this plant on your property?

Muraltia heisteria (Muraltia)

An invasive weed threatening biodiversity values across the high rainfall areas of the Adelaide Hills



What is Muraltia?

Muraltia heisteria (Muraltia) is a prickly environmental weed known to invade intact native vegetation. It outcompetes native plants, reducing habitat for local flora and fauna species.

One of the reasons it is such an effective and aggressive weed is that it produces a large amount of seed that can persist in the soil for many years, making control once established difficult and costly.

A native of Southern Africa, Muraltia populations are now established at a number of locations throughout the Norton Summit/Ashton area. It originates from a diverse range of habitats similar to those of the Adelaide Hills and its potential distribution far exceeds current populations.

Muraltia look-alikes

There are a variety of native plants that look very similar to Muraltia. If unsure, check on the plant in spring as it is much easier to identify when flowering.



The weedy Muraltia can be easily mistaken for a range of native plants, here are two examples of native look-alikes

It's vital to act now and stop the spread of Muraltia



How is Muraltia spread?

Muraltia seed is thought to be spread by water runoff, earth moving/garden machinery, humans and animals as fruit easily sticks to fur and clothing. Which is why it is vital to check your clothes, boots and machinery for seeds when near a Muraltia infestation.

Control methods

When soil is moist, smaller plants can be hand pulled, otherwise cut and swab with herbicide.

- For larger infestations where off-target damage can be avoided, spot spraying may be more appropriate.
- Preventing seed set (generally late November/December) and following up every year until the seed bank is exhausted, is the key to an effective Muraltia control program.
- As fire encourages Muraltia seeds to germinate, there is value in including prescribed burning within an integrated control program. This will only be viable where ample follow up resources are available to avoid exacerbating the issue.
- Landholders should ensure herbicide choice is suitable for its intended purpose, and always follow label instructions.

How to identify Muraltia

Muraltia:

- is a stiff upright shrub to 1 metre tall and 1 metre wide
- produces flowers in spring and early summer with purple petals on the side and a white 'beak' growing from the stem, usually single or in pairs
- leaves are narrow, folded inward, with extremely prickly tips, clustered in tufts along the stem
- stem colour varies from purple to green with fine hairs.

For assistance with identification, contact Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu or take a flowering sample to the State Herbarium at the Botanic Gardens.

Have you seen this plant?

Contact us and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in the region!

Let us know if you have Muraltia in your garden or have seen this plant anywhere else



Further information

Further information is available through Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu

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