

AFRICAN OLIVE

Olea europaea subsp. *africana*

TREE

Family Oleaceae

Origin Africa and Asia

Description An evergreen tree that grows from 2m to 15m high², with spreading branches and a dense, rounded crown⁸. Occurs on a wide range of soils and habitats including clay and coastal sandstone. Also on disturbed sites, roadsides and riverbanks. This tree tolerates dry conditions and high temperatures⁸. The tree has become a problem on the Central Coast where it invades most environments including dunes, headlands and bushland².

Stems/Leaves Erect branching stem with white-grey coloured bark dotted with lenticels. Leaves are glossy grey-green above with green or yellowish-brown scales underneath. A distinctive yellowish mid-vein is present, with veins being obvious on upper surface and obscure below. Simple leaves, opposite arrangement, 6-10 cm long and 1-2.5 cm wide. Leaves are narrow oblong to elliptic in shape, with entire margins and often with a hooked apex⁸.

Flowers Small (3-4 mm) white to cream coloured flowers that flower mainly in spring².

Fruit/Seed Fleshy globular purple to black coloured berries², 25 mm long and 6 mm in diameter. The fruit does not ripen uniformly and is in season May to October, with short longevity. The fruit is dispersed by birds, soil, the nursery trade⁸ and foxes²⁰.

Root system Taproot and lateral roots⁸.

Removal techniques

Manual Small seedlings can be easily removed by hand².

Chemical A number of chemical controls are available². Spray seedlings with glyphosate at a ratio of 1:75-100. For mature plants cut stump, drill/ axe cut/ inject undiluted glyphosate. It is necessary to treat regrowth²².

Notes

There is a record of this species being planted in 1805 in Parramatta by John Macarthur. A common hedge plant it soon became a garden escapee⁸.

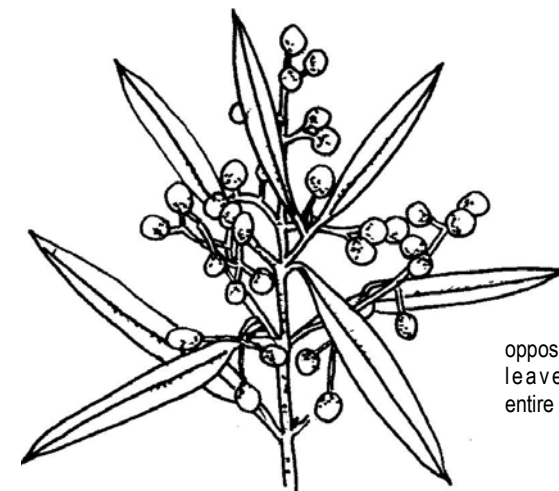
This is not the commercial olive *Olea europaea* subsp. *Europaea*⁸.

This species responds to disturbance by coppices from the base, including fire⁸.

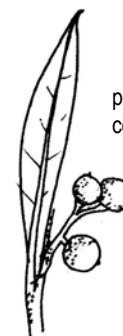
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