

BITOU BUSH

Chrysanthemoides monilifera
subsp. rotundata

SHRUB**Family** Asteraceae**Origin** South Africa

Description A sprawling, erect shrub that grows 1.5m high². It prefers light to medium, well drained soils in open and sunny areas. The shrub is drought and frost tender¹. Bitou Bush is the most significant environmental weed on the NSW coast. Forming large thickets the shrub smothers native plants and threatens the survival of both flora and fauna species. Primarily the shrub invades dunes, but also headlands and rainforest².

Stems/Leaves Stems are thick and young stems are usually woolly-hairy in texture⁵. Simple, alternate leaves broad in shape and pointed at the tip. The leaf margin is variable either entire or toothed⁸.

Flowers The yellow flowers form clusters at the end of branches and bloom most of the year but mainly spring to autumn².

Fruit/Seed Hard, small purplish-black spherical berries². Seeds are grey coloured, shaped like a grain of wheat and narrowing at one end⁴. Dispersed by birds and rabbits the seeds remain viable from 5-10 years. One plant can produce up to 50,000 seeds in one season⁸. The indigestible seeds are dispersed by water⁴ and foxes²⁰.

Root system Taproot and extensive lateral roots that will layer⁸.

Removal techniques

Manual Small seedlings can be easily hand pulled. Large shrubs can be either pulled out or poisoned and left on the site. If left on site Bitou acts as a useful barrier or wind break protecting new plants. Bitou seedling seed heads can be stacked in a pile and if left undisturbed seeds will not germinate. Seed stock stays viable for up to 7 years and follow up work is essential for complete eradication².

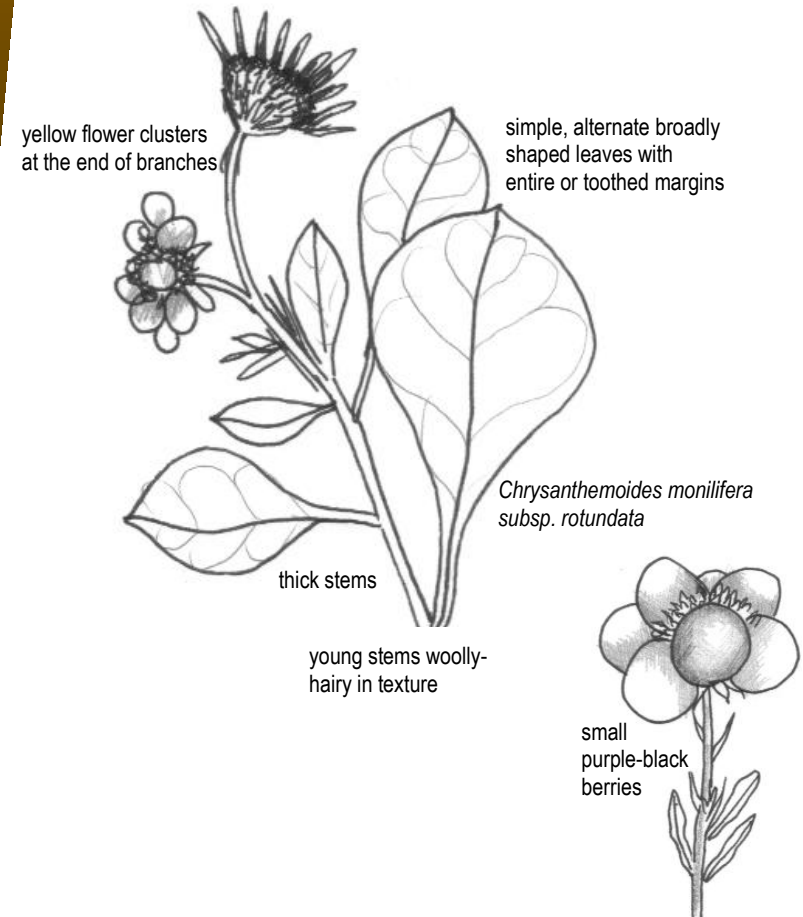
Chemical Chemical controls are available. For small infestations cut the shrubs and paint with glyphosate. Apply a glyphosate spray for larger infestations².

Notes

This species colonises denuded areas rapidly and germinates after fire events⁸.

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