

MICKEY MOUSE PLANT

Ochna serrulata

SHRUB

Family Ochnaceae

Origin South Africa

Description An evergreen shrub growing to a height of 1.5 metres and a spread of 1.5 metres. The plant prefers light, sandy, well-drained soils in open, sunny positions. The species is drought and frost tender ¹. This shrub is a problem on the north and central coast of NSW. It invades coastal rainforest and also survives in more arid environments ².

Stems/Leaves Branches have numerous lenticels, small raised corky spots appearing on young bark through which gaseous exchange takes place ⁷. Alternate, narrow oblong leaves with serrulate and undulate margins. The leaves are a dark glossy green colour whilst new growth is more bronze ⁸.

Flowers Yellow flowers with 5 petals occurring in terminal clusters ¹, flowering spring to autumn ². At the fruiting stage the petals drop and the sepals become bright red ⁸.

Fruit/Seed Green sepals hold up to 5 small glossy green globular fruit approximately 5 to 8 mm long. Sepals turn bright red, whilst fruit ripens to a black colour ⁷. Each fruit contains about 42 seeds which have high viability. Dispersal is via birds ⁸.

Root system Deep taproots that will sucker ⁸.

Removal techniques

Manual Hand remove small plants with entire taproot ². For mature plants dig a narrow but deep hole next to the trunk to a depth of 30 cm or more. Use a mattock handle or steel bar as a lever, and wrap as much of the ochna as possible around the handle forming a corkscrew effect. Take a firm hold on the handle and the weed and lever back until most of the root system is pulled out. Remove any remaining root ²¹.

Chemical Chemical controls are available and give mixed results ². Spray seedlings with glyphosate at a ratio of 1:100. For mature plants scrape stem, drill and apply undiluted glyphosate ²².

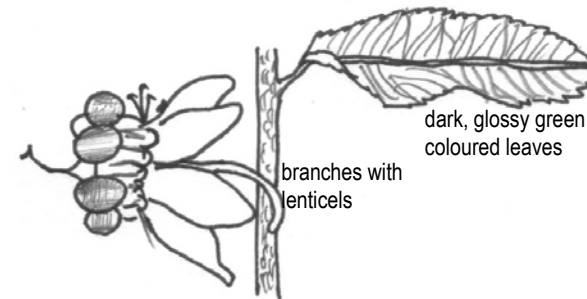
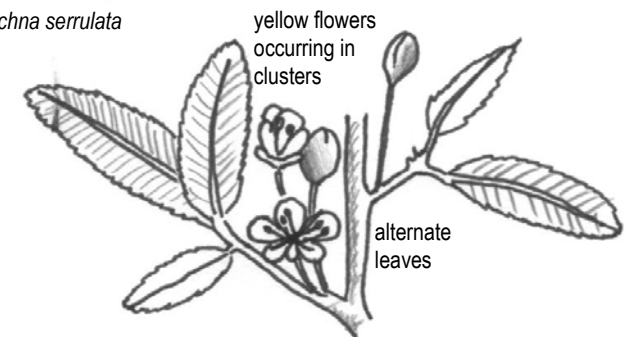
Notes

After disturbances the plant re-shoots from taproots and seeds germinate, even after intense fires ⁸.

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