Tradescantia fluminensis Vell.

*Tradescantia fluminensis* commonly known as ‘wandering jew’ is native to the tropical rainforests of south east Brazil. An invasive mat-forming weed of natural areas, it has been introduced to New Zealand, Australia, the United States, Portugal, Italy, Russia and Japan. It is known to be an agriculture weed in its native range. In its introduced range it is recognized as a significant environment weed with impacts on biological diversity.

In New Zealand studies show that where *T. fluminensis* carpets the ground in canopy-depleted native forest remnants it prevents regeneration of many native plants. The results of a study on the impact of *T. fluminensis* on insect communities, as represented by Malaise-trapped beetles and fungus gnats, in three forest fragments predicted a corresponding decline in invertebrate diversity and fragment complementarity where the weed is established.

A combination of chemical and manual removal methods has been used with success in New Zealand, but has required repeated efforts to ensure continued control. Plant cuttings should not be dumped anywhere as this is the most common source of new weed infestations. The origin of new top soil or fill should be checked as physical transportation of plant segments in soil is a major method of spread. One approach is tree planting to enhance canopy cover and so reduce light availability to *T. fluminensis*. There is experimental evidence to show that shading (artificial) causes a reduction in *T. fluminensis* biomass. Hand weeding and rolling the weed up like a carpet are considered suitable for removal of small infestations. Chemical control by herbicides is considered a practical means of controlling large infestations of *T. fluminensis*. However, re-spraying is often necessary. Furthermore, one of the most widely used herbicides (active ingredient triclopyr) could have detrimental effects on wildlife.

**References:**
