



1. Habit in flower. 2. Close-up of small white flowers. 3. Large glossy green leaves. 4. Small reddish coloured fleshy fruit.



SHRUB

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum* var. *awabuki*)

Introduced

Not Declared

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum is a plant from Japan and Taiwan that has become popular as a garden ornamental in recent years, with a cultivar known as 'Emerald Lustre' the most common in cultivation. It is different from typical Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum* var. *odoratissimum*), which has been grown for many years in Australia and does not seem to be invasive.

Distribution

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum was first reported becoming a serious problem in the Coffs Harbour area on the northern coast of NSW in 2010, with control of this species being undertaken in several bushland sites (i.e. at Korora, Coffs Creek, Mullaway, Arrawarra, Sawtell and Toormina). It also been recorded as a weed in the Port Macquarie, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane areas in recent years. Most of the infestations of this species appearing in bushland currently consist of seedlings and juvenile plants, with relatively few mature plants established at this stage.

Description

This shrub or small tree usually grows 1-4 m tall, but may occasionally reach up to 6 m in height at maturity. It develops brownish-grey bark on its older stems while its younger stems are green or reddish-tinged and hairless. The paired leaves are borne on green or reddish stalks 1-3 cm long and are also hairless. These leaves are relatively large (10-20 cm long and 4-9 cm wide) with irregularly toothed to almost entire margins and usually have pointed tips. They are thick and leathery in texture, bright green in colour, with a glossy or lustrous appearance. However, young leaves and new growth is often slightly coppery tinged.

The small white flowers are produced in branched clusters (6-13 cm long) at the tips of the branches in spring. Large numbers of the sweet-smelling flowers (up to 7 mm across) are present in each cluster. Each flower has five tiny green sepals (2-4 mm long), five small white petals, and five cream or pale yellow stamens. The petals are fused together into a short tube (3-4 mm long) at the base and have spreading lobes with rounded tips. The small egg-shaped fruit (about 8 mm long and 5-6 mm wide) turn from green to red or blackish in colour as they mature. They are fleshy but contain single hard seed in the centre.

Quick Facts

- > A shrub or small tree usually growing 1-4 m tall
- > Large glossy green paired leaves that are leathery in nature
- > Small white flowers arranged in large branched clusters
- > Small fleshy fruit that turn from green to red as they mature

Habitat

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum is a potential weed of rainforest gaps and margins, riparian vegetation, disturbed bushland and forestry plantations in sub-tropical, tropical and warmer temperate regions.





1. Young plant growing in a creek in suburban Brisbane.. 2. The cultivar 'Emerald Lustre' being grown as a garden ornamental.

Reproduction and Dispersal

This species mainly reproduces by seed, which are thought to be dispersed by birds and other animals that eat the bright red mature fruit. Seeds may also be spread into bushland areas in dumped garden waste.

Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum has quickly spread from gardens into the understorey of rainforest, riparian and swamp forest communities in the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour areas in recent years. As it is fast-growing and readily spread by animals that eat its fruit, it has the potential to become a serious environmental weed in these habitats.

Control Methods

Seedlings and younger plants can be removed by hand with the aid of suitable tools, but care must be taken to remove the crown, as plants may regrow from the base. Care should be taken to cause as little disturbance to the soil and nearby vegetation as possible, as this will promote the growth of other weeds.

Larger plants that are difficult to remove manually may be controlled using herbicides. While no herbicides are currently registered for the control of Awabuki Sweet Viburnum in Australia, some products may be used to control this woody environmental weed in Queensland via the APVMA off-label permit number 11463 (<http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER11463.PDF>). For example, formulations of Glyphosate may be applied using the cut-stump, basal bark or stem injection methods. Please read the permit carefully for specific information on products, rates and conditions of use. Unless otherwise stated in this permit, the use of the product must also be in accordance with the instructions on its label. Within other state boundaries, it is recommended that all managers consult any relevant permits or government legislation applicable to their region.

Look a-likes

Awabuki Sweet Viburnum is very similar to Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum* var. *odoratissimum*). However, Awabuki Sweet Viburnum has larger bright green leaves that are leathery and glossy in appearance, while Sweet Viburnum has smaller dull green leaves that are not thick and leathery.



Top. Habit of Sweet Viburnum.

Bottom. Smaller and duller green leaves.

The control methods referred to in Weed Watch™ should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Technigro does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

This information has been developed with the assistance of Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2013