Green cestrum  
*Cestrum parqui*  

Green cestrum is an escaped garden plant, which has become a weed of roadsides, creeks and neglected sites in central and South East Queensland. The roots, seeds, stems and leaves are toxic to many domestic animals.

Generally dispersed by birds, seeds are also spread by water movement. Plants can also regrow from cut root pieces. Seedlings will not readily establish under conditions of vigorous competition with other plants.

The plant grows vigorously if neglected. On alluvial flats it has been known to outcompete most other vegetation.

Green cestrum needs careful control because its extensive, shallow root system can produce many new plants from suckers, particularly after root disturbance or injury.

Green cestrum is an invasive plant which can disrupt native flora communities and ecosystems.

**Description**

Green cestrum is also known as green poison berry or Chilean cestrum.

It is a shrub perennial shrub up to 3m high, with one or more stems emerging from each crown. The young stems are whitish; older stems are darker, striated at the base and mottled above.

The leaves are alternate, up to 12cm long and 2.5cm wide, and have an unpleasant odour when crushed. Flowers are greenish-yellow in clusters at the ends of branches. The flower tubes are up to 2.5cm long with five small terminal lobes. They have an unpleasant odour by day, but are fragrant at night.

The fruit is a purplish-black, oval berry about 1cm long containing one or two seeds. Seeds have an irregular shape and sharp angles 3–4mm long.

**Management**

Green cestrum can be destroyed by digging out the plants completely. Care must be taken to remove all the yellow roots, otherwise regrowth will occur. It is preferable to burn the roots.

**Reference:** Land Protection (Invasive Plants and Animals), 2007. “PP15, Weed Busters Fact Sheet”, the State of Queensland, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.