



Antigonon leptopus
(an-TIG-oh-non LEP-toh-puss)
Coral vine
Polygonaceae

Origin: Mexico

Invasive Status in South Africa:
NEMBA 2014 – Category 1b

Reason for introduction in South Africa: Ornamental

Description: A long-lived perennial vine with stems often climbing up over other vegetation 6-10m tall, occasionally reaching 15m in height. It produces underground tubers and loses its leaves during the dry season in areas with seasonal rains. Leaves are simple and borne on stalks 1-5cm long. The leaves are light to dark green in colour, have a strongly wrinkled appearance, and are lined with a network of veins. Flowers: These flower clusters (4-20cm long) have hairy stalks and the flowers are arranged into small groups along the branches. Individual flowers are borne on smaller stalks 3-10mm long and each flower has five 'petals' that are usually bright pink in colour, but may occasionally be white or reddish.

Problem areas: KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

Dispersal and Impact: The seeds float on water and may also be spread to new locations by domestic and wild animals that eat the fruit. This species has the capability to reproduce sexually by seeds and vegetatively by stems and underground tubers. This dual reproductive behaviour aids its survival as a successful weed. *A. leptopus* has the potential to modify and collapse native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures and altering ecological functions. Wherever *A. leptopus* invades, it completely smothers native trees, out-competes understory plants, and alters fire regimes (i.e., leaves dry and fall during the dry season providing fuel for wildfires)

Control: A combination of manual and chemical methods has been recommended for the management. Larger infestations can be controlled by first removing or burning the foliage and the aboveground segments of the plant. Later (3-4 weeks after manual removal), all re-sprouts should be sprayed with a foliar application of the herbicide. Follow-up treatment and repeated applications of herbicide might be necessary to kill remaining plants and all re-sprouts.

Category 1b: These are established invasive species which must be controlled and wherever possible, removed and destroyed. Any form of trade or planting is strictly prohibited and landowners are obligated to control Cat. 1b plants on their properties. A species management plan should be drafted for large properties.

