

The California Invasive Plant Council Student Chapter recommends that you

DON'T PLANT

NGAIO TREE



Photos: Júlio Reis / Regents of UC California

Scientific Name: *Myoporum laetum*

Other Common Names: False sandalwood, Mouse hole tree

Description:

The Ngaio tree is a coastal shrub or small tree, found in lowland areas throughout its native land in New Zealand. It is evergreen and can grow to a height of 20 feet or larger, and bears white or near white blossoms in late winter to mid spring. The leaves contain small oil glands which appear as small yellow/white speckles which makes the leaf quite distinguishable from other shrubs.

Biology, Habitat, and Spread:

Ngaio flourishes in coastal areas in the Orange county region, and may be found along the coast from Sonoma County to San Diego County. Ngaio grows best in sandy well drained soils, they are rarely found in interior regions. Seeds are popular among birds for food and are dispersed from inside their digestive tracts over long distances.

Impact:

The Ngaio tree over shades and stuns the growth of other competing native plants, in dense stands. Birds ingest the seeds from the Ngaio's heavy seed production causes dense stands of Ngaio. The oil secreting from the leaves of the Ngaio are toxic for livestock and could be fatal. Within the interior of the stands of Ngaio are dry and tangled dead branches which are highly susceptible to wildfires.

Native Range: New Zealand

Invaded Range:



Control Methods:

Ngaio tree can be removed by chemical and mechanical methods. Best way is to cut trunk at ground level and saturate it with a certified herbicide applicator. Mature plants are best suited for this method. Leaving any amount of stump may allow re-sprouting. Seedlings and saplings can be pulled by hand, but they have long, strong taproots. Pulling is best done while soil is wet. Young plants can re-sprout as well if root remains in the ground.

Alternatives:



Griselinia
Griselinia littoralis

The New Zealand native small tree grows up to ten feet in height and has thick, leathery, lustrous green leaves. It makes an excellent, dense, compact screen or windbreak. Griselinia produces greenish flowers that are rather small, and the fruits, like clusters of small Ivy berries.

Photo: www.wildchicken.com



Sweet bay
Laurus nobilis

A Mediterranean native, this shrub/tree is well suited for most California climates. It has aromatic leaves for cooking. In warm areas sweet bay bears yellowish-white fluffy flowers and small black fruit. Its dense growth habit makes it good for planting screens or background planting.

Photo: J.S. Peterson



Toyon / California Holly
Heteromeles arbutifolia

Toyon forms dense shrubs that can grow from 6-25 feet tall depending on care and training. In the summer, clusters of small white flowers form that turn into clusters of bright red berries in the fall and winter. Toyon tolerates drought conditions but looks better if watered regularly.

Photo: J.S. Peterson

References:

PlantRight: <http://www.plantright.org/>
Invasive Plant Atlas of the United States: <http://www.invasive.org/>
USDA Plant Database: <http://plants.usda.gov/>