

Californian poppy

Eschscholzia californica



Identification

- Multi-branched plant that can grow to 60 cm
- Finely divided grey or blue-green leaves
- Yellow-orange flowers in spring and summer
- Flowers only open in sunlight
- Ribbed seed capsules (3–9 cm long) release small black or dark brown seeds



Californian poppy Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)



Californian poppy flowers and seed pod Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)

Where is it found?

Californian poppy is a very tolerant species. It grows well in hot, dry conditions, colonising open, sunny areas with dry or well-drained soils. Californian poppy is a popular garden plant but can also be found growing in disturbed areas, braided riverbeds, scree slopes, subalpine herbfields, coastal cliffs, dune systems, tussocklands and along road sides.

Why is it a problem?

A prolific seed producer, Californian poppy can rapidly invade dry environments such as braided riverbeds that are home to many native grasses, cushion plants and herbs adapted to living in harsh conditions. In these situations, Californian poppy can quickly compete with and overtop existing native species.

Control

Cut-off seedheads before they ripen and dispose of at a refuse transfer station. Alternatively, small patches of plants can be pulled or dug out before they set seed. To help prevent further Californian poppy plants from establishing at a site, where appropriate, replant the area with suitable species that will shade out germinating seedlings.

For more information on Californian poppy, refer to the Weedbusters website (www.weedbusters.co.nz).



Californian poppy growing in a riverbed Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)