

# PEST OF THE MONTH

## BANANA PASSION VINE

Banana passion vine is a large, vigorous scrambling evergreen vine with tendrils, capable of climbing 10 metres or higher.

It produces masses of pink tubular flowers throughout the warmer weather that ripen into yellow oval fruit (banana passion fruit) up to 12cm long. These contain many seeds enveloped in orange pulp and this edible sweet pulp has been the attraction for many gardeners.

This fast-growing vine from tropical South America is capable of smothering native trees and shrubs in gullies, on forest margins and in well-lit areas in tall forest. It can topple

smaller trees and its dense vegetation prevents natural regeneration. Viable seed is produced within two years of establishment and these are distributed by birds, possums, pigs and humans. As it is listed on the National Plant Pest Accord, there is a ban on its sale and propagation.

Banana passion vine represents a serious threat to the indigenous biodiversity of Golden Bay, and residents are required under the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy to control the vine. If you live outside Golden Bay in an area with very few plants, it is worth controlling them before they become widespread.

Control methods include cutting all vines at ground level and immediately treating the



stumps with a small amount of herbicide gel (Vigilant) – care must be taken near desirable trees. Conversely, an effective herbicide spray can be sprayed on matted continuous banana passion vine leaves. Once long-established infestations have been killed, it is necessary to control the prolific regeneration of seedlings. For further information phone your Biosecurity Officer on 03 543 7225.