

Bridal Creeper

Coast Action/ Coastcare

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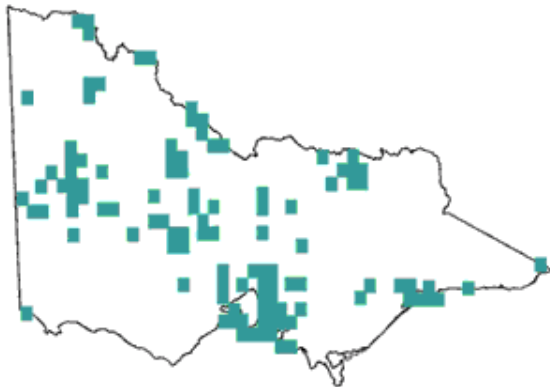
Botanical Name: *Asparagus asparagoides*

Family: Liliaceae

Origin: South Africa



Distribution



Weed Dispersal

Birds eat berries and spread seeds. Seed laden soil is spread by vehicles and animals. Garden wastes are dumped in the bush.

Indigenous Look-a-likes

Small-leaf Clematis, *Clematis microphylla*

Opposite, non-parallel veined leaves divided into 3 leaflets. Small, open, creamy flowers and silver-haired seeds.

Common Apple-berry, *Billardiera scandens*

Thick, narrow, non-parallel veined leaves. Bell-like, 5 petalled flowers.

Lignums, *Muehlenbeckia sp.*

Larger leaves on stalks and small, yellow, 5 petalled flowers.

Identification

Form

CREEPER - Perennial, herbaceous branched climber growing to 3m tall with tuberous root system.

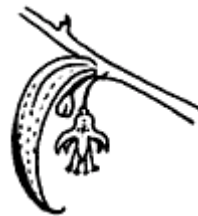
Leaf

Glossy, green, alternating, parallel veined 'leaves' (cladodes) from 1-7cm x 8-30mm.



Flower

Small, greenish-white, sweetly scented, hanging on stalks singly or in pairs along branchlets.



Fruit

Small, red berry, juicy when ripe, 6-10 diameter with up to 9 black, shiny, ovoid seeds.



Management

Permission should be sought from the land manager before any weed control is undertaken.

Removal methods

Remove small and scattered plants first and then target outer edges of larger infestations.

Bridal Creeper has a tuberous root system.

Small Plants



With minimal soil disturbance, hand pull or dig out small patches carefully removing whole tuberous root system.

Best removed prior to flowering.



Immediately spray new patches with suitable herbicide as first year growth is most susceptible.

Large Established Plants

Large patches have massive root systems which must be completely removed for effective control. Where feasible, solarisation ie. covering with black plastic for up to 12 months is effective.



Fire will destroy Autumn growth but must be followed up by herbicide treatment.



Foliage may be spot sprayed with herbicide. **Spray prior to flowering when rhizome food reserves are depleted.**

The use of biological control agents is currently being investigated.

Disposal

Burn berries and rhizomes in a very hot fire or seal in strong bags and take to the tip.

Maintenance

Monitor site regularly for regrowth and new seedlings. Hand pull or dig out seedlings. Prior to flowering carry out annual spraying for at least two and possibly up to six years with heavy infestations to further deplete rhizome food reserves. Replant indigenous plants to discourage seedling regrowth.

Life Cycle

The life cycle may vary according to seasons and site conditions such as soil type, aspect and location.



Replacement Plants

Replace Bridal Creeper with appropriate indigenous plants. Encourage indigenous plant regeneration. Seek advice from you local indigenous nursery or your NRE Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator.

Herbicide Recommendations

- Always consider manual weed removal methods before herbicide treatments, to avoid the unnecessary introduction of herbicides into the natural environment.
- Information on up-to-date herbicide treatment is available from herbicide companies.
- Users of herbicides should read the label fully, follow directions carefully and ensure that correct precautions and procedures are applied. To do otherwise is at the user's own risk.
- It is advisable for at least one member of any environment group to have undertaken an approved chemical safety course. See local TAFE courses.

Did you know?

- Bridal Creeper is also known as Smilax Asparagus.
- Bridal Creeper is a very serious threat to indigenous vegetation.
- It prevents germination of native ground cover and shrubs by depriving them of light.
- It will also damage other vegetation that it climbs.
- Roots can be produced whenever the stems are in contact with the soil.
- Disturbance created by control may allow more weeds to colonize so follow up is needed.
- Bridal Creeper was introduced to Australia as a garden plant and is still sold for hanging baskets in commercial nurseries. It has been in Australia since at least 1871.
- The botanical name for Bridal Creeper was formerly *Myrsiphyllum asparagoides*.
- A cladode is a stem assuming the form and function of a leaf.

Feedback

New information is vital. Please inform your local DNRE Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator of your weed management results.

References

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