

Bridal Creeper

Asparagus asparagoides

Bridal Creeper is a Weed of National Significance. It is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts.



The Problem / Impact

Bridal creeper entered the country as a garden plant and is now a major weed of bushland in southern Australia, where its climbing stems and foliage smother native plants. It forms a thick mat of underground tubers which impedes the root growth of other plants and often prevents seedling establishment.



Bridal creeper invades dry coastal vegetation, heath land and healthy woodland, mallee shrubland, lowland grassland and grassy woodland, dry sclerophyll forest and woodland, damp sclerophyll forest, riparian vegetation, rock outcrop vegetation, and warm temperate rainforest.

In South Australia and southwestern Western Australia bridal creeper is considered the most important weed threat to biodiversity.



Growth Habit & Biological Weak Link

Bridal creeper is a climbing herb or vine to three metres, arising from a short rhizome attached to tuberous roots. Bridal creeper plants take at least three years to reach flowering size - the flowers appearing along the length of the shoots in August and September. The green berries turn red in late spring to early summer.

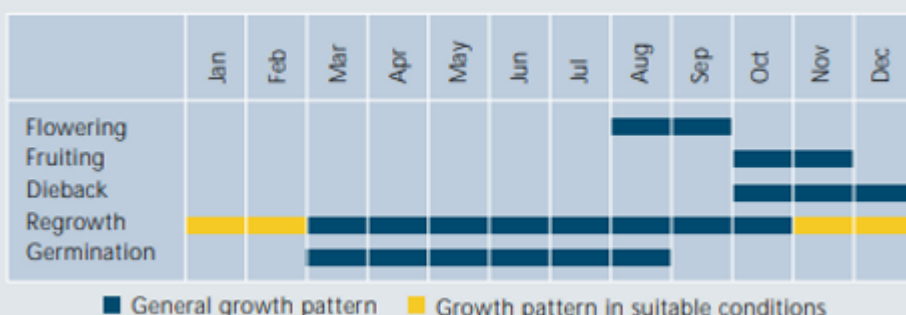


An underground mat of rhizomes and tubers make up the bulk of the plant. These tubers provide water, energy and nutrients that enable the plant to survive over summer and allow rapid shoot growth in autumn.



Bridal Creeper has a number of features which make it difficult to control – its tuber reserves provide a buffer against adverse seasons, it has a wide germination range and, unlike some other weeds, it can invade undisturbed sites. But there are also weaknesses in its biology – it has a relatively short-lived seedbank, seed production only occurs on early emerging stems, and the seed output in old infestations is small.

Growth calendar





Management & Control Options

Because of extensive storage reserves in the root tissues, the most effective means of managing bridal creeper involves integrating a range of treatment techniques:

Control options

Type of infestation	Herbicide	Physical	Fire	Mechanical	Biological
Isolated plants or small infestations	Once plant is correctly identified, treat with registered herbicide.	Remove isolated plants before seeding. Be sure to remove all underground rhizomes and tubers.	Not suitable.	Not suitable.	Not suitable.
Larger infestations	Apply after a prescribed fire in autumn when growth is most vigorous. Avoid contact with desirable plants or soil near tree root zones.	Not suitable.	Use a prescribed burn in autumn followed by application of herbicide.	Slashing the stems and foliage may prevent fruit production and deplete root reserves, but must be continued over several years in the absence of other treatments.	Community groups can become involved in rearing the bridal creeper leafhopper and distributing the rust fungus. See CSIRO website (details on p.4) for more information.
Orchards	Spot spray with recommended herbicide.	Prune lower limbs to provide access under trees.	Not suitable.	Not suitable.	Trials began in citrus orchards in 2001.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL:

Bridal Creeper Rust and Leaf Hoppers as soon as possible. Leaf Hopper and Rust may be transferred from infected areas by collecting a bag full of infested and infected green stems and leaves, sealing it so the leaf hoppers don't escape and then transferring it to the infestation as quickly as possible and rubbing it into the Bridal Creeper greenery.

CHEMICAL CONTROL:

For more details go to:

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/herbicides/bridal-creeper-control>

Herbicide: Metsulfuron (Group B) (various trade names: see APVMA link)	
Active ingredient	600g/kg metsulfuron methyl
Rate of product/10L water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5g registered 0.02g recommended for bushland treatment as this causes minimal damage to other vegetation
Time of application	Mid-June to late August. Follow up treatment required for a couple of seasons.
Wetting agent	Pulse at 2mL/L



Rehabilitation & Prevention

Prevent new outbreaks: Do not plant bridal creeper in your garden; replace existing plants with desirable species and safely dispose of garden waste. Keep 500 m buffer zones for bridal creeper around the edge of an infestation.

Follow-up: After fire treat regrowth carefully with herbicide to limit above ground growth and further reduce the stored root reserves. Monitor infestations regularly and over several years because of the probability of regrowth from remnants of the root system. Regularly check for new outbreaks. It may be possible to hand dig roots in new or small infestations.



References & Further Information

Sources of Information for this flier:

- Weed Management Guide (Bridal creeper - *Asparagus asparagoides*) - CRC for Australian Weed Management and the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage
- DPIRD Website: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/declared-plants/bridal-creeper-declared-pest>
- A Review of Bridal Creeper Control in the Southwest of Western Australia 2018 - Report by Geraldine and Steve Janicke September 2018, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group

Further Reading:

- Moore, J & Wheeler, J (2019) Southern Weeds and their control. Department of Agriculture and Food WA.
- HerbiGuide www.herbiguide.com.au - Detailed information about weed species and control methods.

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