

Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS)



Why is it a problem?

Bridal creeper is an aggressive and highly invasive weed that has serious impacts on the environment.

Introduced to Australia as a garden plant in the 1870s, it has since jumped the garden fence and spread throughout many parts of Australia.

Bridal creeper invades bushland, smothers native plants and reduces the health and diversity of our natural and agricultural resources. Bridal creeper:

- > Produces a large volume of seed, which is readily spread by birds and animals;
- > Roots form a thick, impenetrable mat, preventing natural regeneration of native plants;
- > Survives harsh conditions such as fire, frost, and drought; and tolerates a range of soil types;
- > Limits access to beaches, parks and trails;
- > Can spread further than its current range; and
- > Impacts on the quality and yield of primary industries such as citrus and forestry.

The Western Cape form of bridal creeper
See over for more info



What does it look like?

Bridal creeper is a climbing vine with sharply pointed, shiny green leaves. A mass of scented white flowers appear in late winter, followed by small green berries in spring.

The berries ripen to red during summer and are an obvious food source for birds, who contribute to the weed's spread.

The plant typically loses its leaves in the dry summer months but its extensive root system allows the plant to survive and regrow with autumn rains. A mat of tuberous roots grows 10 – 20 cm below the soil surface and makes up 90% of the plant's biomass.

Bridal creeper prefers to climb, and is often seen scrambling over other plants, along fence lines and under bird roosting sites such as tall trees.



Bridal creeper 'columns' climb a native tree



Leaves



Flower



Berries



Tuber

Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*)



Where does it grow?

Bridal creeper invades a range of situations including coastal areas, forests, heathlands, woodlands and riparian areas. Vegetation on roadsides and farms is particularly vulnerable.

Bridal creeper is relatively common in Victoria, but there is still potential for further spread. Integrated control will reduce the chance of spread; and protect vulnerable native plants and animals.

What can I do about bridal creeper?

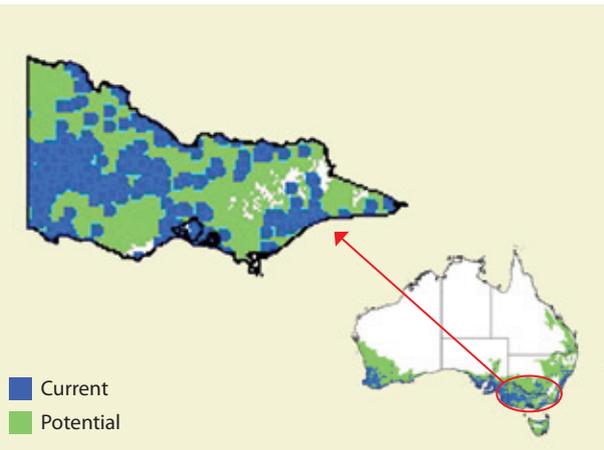
Bridal creeper is a restricted weed in Victoria. The sale, trade or transport of bridal creeper propagules, either as plants, seeds or contaminants, in other materials is prohibited.

There are several control options for bridal creeper. Consideration should be given to the following points:

- > **Biological control.** Will suppress growth and limit reproduction.
- > **Hand removal.** You must ensure all root material is dug up as bridal creeper can spread from root fragments.
- > **Herbicide application.** Care must be taken to avoid damage to surrounding native vegetation. Follow all label directions.
- > **Early Action.** New infestations are easier and more economical to control.
- > **Follow up.** Seedlings or regrowth may emerge so ensure you revisit control sites.
- > **Prevent spread.** Dispose of the weed appropriately. Don't dump garden waste in bushland or local reserves.
- > **Seek advice.** Contact your local DPI office for control advice (see website below).



Current and potential distribution of
Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*)



■ Current
■ Potential

Bridal creeper's weedy relatives

Other *Asparagus* weeds are having similar impacts on our environment. Look out for these closely related plants and seek advice on control options.



Western Cape bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) [tuber left] is even more damaging than the common form of bridal creeper as it is resistant to biological control agents. This form has larger tubers that grow in a rosette close to the soil surface. The leaves are larger, darker, duller and thicker than the common form.



Asparagus fern (*Asparagus scandens*) is a perennial, twining vine with below ground tubers (tubers are not fleshy). The stems are wiry and can climb to 3 metres. Leaves are dark green and scale like but, unlike bridal creeper, this plant does not shed its leaves over summer. Berries are produced in spring and ripen to orange.

For more information

Visit these websites for more details on who to contact, weed identification, control options and other *Asparagus* weeds:
www.dpi.vic.gov.au | www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/



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