

# 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.



## 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.

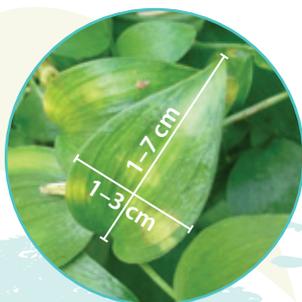
The berries ripen to red during summer and are an obvious food source for birds, who contribute to the weed's spread.

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 southern and coastal New South Wales, but there is a high potential for further spread. The control of all infestations is needed to prevent serious impacts to native plants and animals.

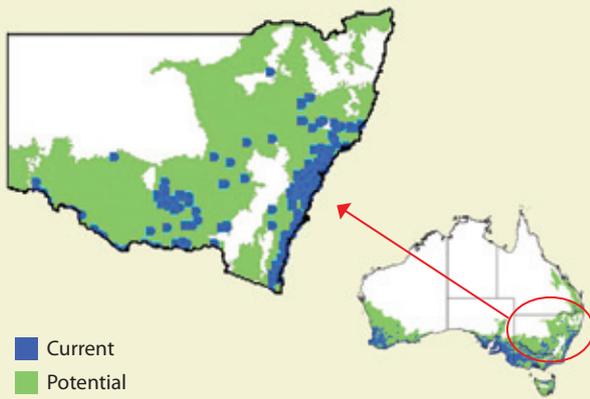
## What can I do about bridal creeper?

Bridal creeper is a noxious weed in New South Wales and must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed. In areas where bridal creeper is a class 4 weed its growth and spread must be controlled according to the measures specified in a management plan published by the local control authority (council). See the NSW DPI website (below) for more information.

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 council weed officer.

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



## 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.



**Asparagus fern** (*Asparagus aethiopicus*) is a multi-stemmed, prostrate, perennial shrub with a thick mat of tuberous roots. Numerous tubers form off a central 'crown', which contains the rhizome. As with bridal creeper, the root system will suppress the growth of other plants. A prolific seeder, *Asparagus* fern will thrive in infertile, shallow, sandy soils such as coastlines, especially in shady conditions.



**Climbing asparagus fern** (*Asparagus plumosus*) is a wiry, perennial climber to 5 metres. Seeds mostly germinate in autumn or spring, preferring high rainfall climates. Flowering occurs from spring to summer, followed by small black fruits. Fibrous, dense roots form mats below the soil surface, preventing the establishment of native seedlings. Sometimes confused with *A. africanus*.

### For more information

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



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