

Bridal Veil *Asparagus declinatus*



Leaves are a blue - green colour, soft and needle-like, growing to a length of between 3 to 10 mm. They are densely arranged in groups of 3 along soft, finely-branched side shoots, off wiry main stems. Shoots appear in autumn and scramble along the ground. As the weather cools the foliage becomes dense and the colour deepens to a dark blue-green. Shoots wither and die back in summer. The greenish to white **flowers** of bridal veil appear in August, developing into berries in late August to September. The **berries** are ovoid and coloured a light green at first, ripening to a translucent white on maturity. The fruit averages 10 mm in length and 7 mm in width. Each fruit contains between 5 to 8 seeds. Seed is distributed mainly by birds eating berries and defecating the seed far from the parent plant. Bridal veil produces an extensive **underground root system** consisting of branching rhizomes, which bear numerous, large, bulb-like tubers. This root mass generally occupies the top 15 cm of the soil and accounts for 85% of the total mass of the plant. This storage capacity allows the plant to survive long periods without water. Bridal veil is considered to be as invasive as bridal creeper. In South Australia concerns have been raised that bridal veil will occupy the same ecological niches as bridal creeper.

Asparagus Fern *Asparagus scandens*

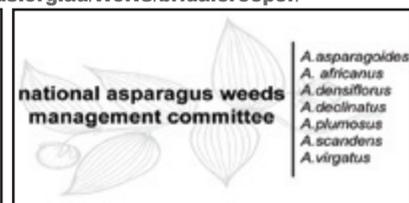


Leaves are a deep green colour and scale like, varying in length from 5 to 15mm and 0.5 to 1.5mm wide. Leaves grow from flat lateral branches off a single climbing stem that can reach a height of several metres. **Berries** are produced from October, changing from a bright green to orange - red when ripe. Asparagus fern does not die back in summer. It can tolerate a wide range of conditions from wet, deep shade to open dry forest. **Flowers** are produced from August onwards. They are small, white to pinkish, 6 petalled, borne singly and grow to a length between 5 - 7 mm. Male and female flowers grow on different plants. A single seed berry is produced from the flower .

The **root mass** forms from the short branching rhizome. The tubers are narrow and infrequently arranged along the length of the root system. Tubers are 5 to 10 mm wide and 10 to 50 mm in length.

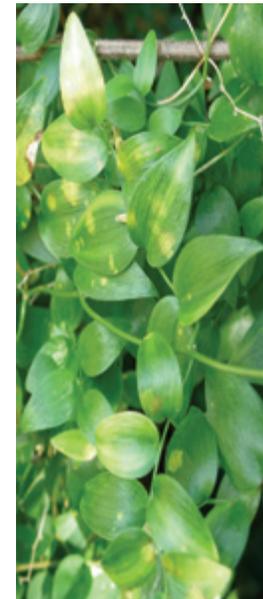
Local contact details

National Asparagus Weeds Management Coordinator
<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/>



CAN YOU RECOGNISE ASPARAGUS WEEDS?

Bridal creeper *Asparagus asparagoides*



Leaves are broadly ovate and end in a point. Colour is a shiny green with a waxy feel. Length ranges between 10 to 70 mm and width from 4 to 30 mm. Leaves are borne in groups on small side branches alternating along the stem. Plants defoliate and die back in early summer. The yellow spots shown in the picture are caused by the rust fungus released as a biological control agent. Annual shoots emerge from the underground root mass in autumn in Mediterranean and temperate climates. The shoots will persist year round if adequately watered.



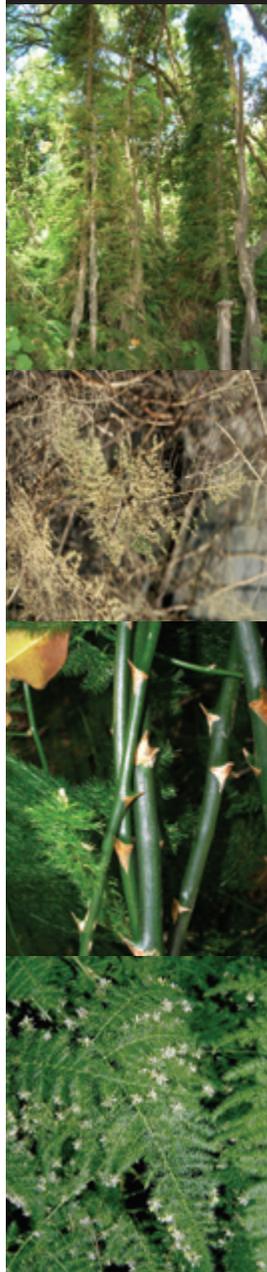
Thick **tuber mats** containing the rhizomes develop between 10 to 20 cm underground. These perennial mats make up 90% of the plants biomass. Tubers range in size from 25 to 40 mm long and 8 to 20 mm wide.



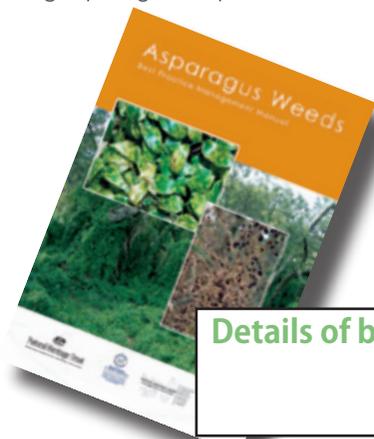
White, scented **flowers** appear in late winter to early spring. Green **berries** containing seed follow in October, ripening to red in November. Seed dispersal is mainly through birds eating berries and defecating seed where they perch.

Climbing Asparagus Fern *Asparagus plumosus*

Similar to *Asparagus africanus*



Climbing asparagus fern is a **spiny vine** with wiry, climbing stems reaching a length of up to 5 metres. It is recognisable by its fine branches and **leaves** that are in one plane (resembling a fish skeleton). The leaves are cylindrical, in groups of 8 to 15 per axil. The flowers are greenish to white and solitary in the axils. **Flowering** time occurs from spring and continues into summer with **berries** ripening in late summer. The berries are a flattened, globular shape. Colour of the berry may vary from an orange to deep red when ripe. The berry will eventually turn black. Stems are armed with numerous, persistent **recurved spines**. Shoots emerge from the crown in the autumn months. The crown consists of thick, underground **rhizomes** and root mass which are fleshy and a whitish-brown colour. Unlike other weedy *Asparagus* species, the shoots of the climbing asparagus are perennial.



Ground (Basket) Asparagus *Asparagus aethiopicus*



The **leaves** of the ground asparagus are flat, match-like structures 25 mm in length growing in groups of between two and five from a branching stem. The plant grows in either an erect or sprawling fashion with multiple, **thorny stems** emerging from a central underground crown. The **root system** consists of sporadic, fleshy white to brown tubers which form dense underground fibrous clumps or mats. Groups of creamy white to pink **flowers** are produced on short branches off the main stem. Translucent, globular, **berries** form, which ripen to a deep red. Flowering and fruiting times may vary according to where the plant is growing. In ideal conditions the plant is capable of fruiting year round. Ground asparagus grows particularly well in shaded areas and in low fertility, shallow, sandy soils. The weed is prevalent in coastal, urban and bushland sites, particularly around housing developments where disturbances by machinery provides ongoing invasion opportunities. Ground asparagus has naturalised in south-east Queensland and along the New South Wales coast, where it has invaded coastal environments, rainforests, frontal dunes, sclerophyll forest and coastal heath. Isolated populations are being managed in the south west of Western Australia. After bridal creeper, ground asparagus is the most prolific asparagus weed found in Australia.

Garden Asparagus *Asparagus officinalis*



Garden or edible asparagus is native to Europe, unlike other weeds from this genus which originate from Southern Africa. It does share many of the African's weedy traits such as developing succulent berries and growing dense underground rhizome and root mats. The plant is erect and much branched growing to a height of approximately 1.5 metres. The fine **leaves** are cylindrical with a few in each axil. Solitary, greenish-white **flowers** appear in autumn and continue through summer. The flowers are followed by translucent **berries** appearing in early summer, ripening to red later in the season. The edible portion of the plant, the new annual shoots or spears, grow from the underground **rhizome** in spring. The plant has naturalised across Australia with the exception of the Northern Territory. Farming practices have changed to the cultivation of sterile (male) plants however mixed sexes will still be growing in backyard vegetable gardens and abandoned market gardens.

Details of best practice control techniques for six of Australia's worst *Asparagus* weeds are available free of charge in hardcopy and electronic format from the bridal creeper web site at - www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/