

The Bridal Creeper

newsletter of the national asparagus weeds management committee

back copies available from www.weeds.org.au/bridalcreeper/

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Asparagus Weed Mapping Completed

One of the objectives of the national bridal creeper strategy was to map the current and potential distribution of the worst Asparagus weeds.

This has now been completed. The maps were produced using *Climax* software which matches the climatic conditions of the weed's country of origin with similar climatic zones in Australia. This gives a prediction of where the weed may well survive if introduced into that area.

current distribution. This information was then sorted by IBRA (Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia) regions at a national level and NRM / CMA regions on the State maps.

The result is maps which predict the potential for the spread of Asparagus weeds. Please feel free to use these maps in presentations or in evaluating the threat posed to your region

Recorded infestations, from herbaria records and some State databases were added to give an indication of

Maps are available on CD from Dennis Gannaway at no cost, contact details below.



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DEFEATING THE WEED MENACE



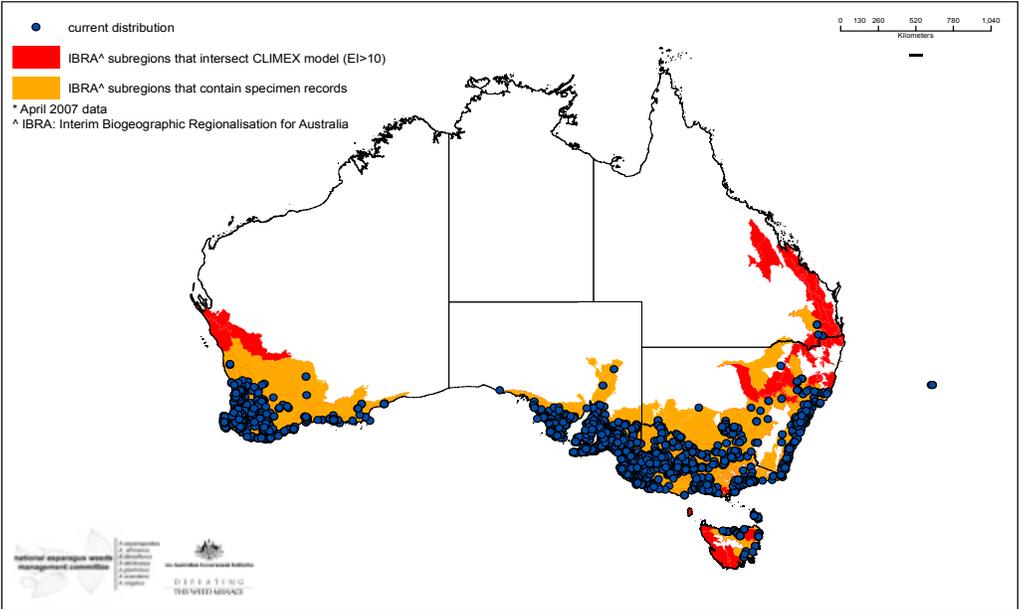
the fine print disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee nor those of any of the funding bodies associated with the Committee.

Advice offered in the newsletter is of a general nature and should not be exclusively used in any decision making process.

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Current and potential distribution of *Asparagus asparagoides**



The following species have been mapped.
aethiopicus, africanus, asparagoides, declinatus, officinalis, plumosus, scandens, virgatus and western cape form of bc

Success with *Crioceris* spp. on Eyre Peninsula

The leaf-eating beetle (*Crioceris* sp.) was first released on the Eyre Peninsula in 2004 in the Wanilla forest. The adults were set free in an old forestry compartment of Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*). Only a few beetles were seen again and no larvae found. There is a strong likelihood that the larvae were predated on by ants seen in the area.

A more successful site was established at Big Swamp, 20 km West of Port Lincoln. 300 beetles were released on the roadside in May 2005. Vegetation comprises of Drooping Sheoake (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), and the occasional large Bottlebrush (*Callistemon macropunctatus*). The understorey is dominated by bridal creeper which grows 3 metres high. Over the next year several site visits were made with no evidence or sightings of larvae or adult beetles found.

The site was again visited in May 2006. Immediately I noticed much of the young bridal creeper shoots and foliage has been grazed. On closer inspection larvae were sighted on the younger shoots. On that day I counted around 30 larvae. The effect on the bridal creeper was noticeable, with damage to young shoots evident at 18 metres to the West of the release point and 20 metres to the East.. The larvae were actively eating the new shoots growing at higher and mid levels across the site. By the end of July 2006 no more larvae to be seen, having had enough of the cold frosty nights.

Releases of the rust fungus and the leafhopper had been made along the Flinders Highway since 2002. All three agents are now present at the Big Swamp site. Bridal creeper growth is severely reduced with leaf fall occurring about six weeks before other sites and no seed production at all.

During a site visit in April 2007 approximately 50 larvae were seen. To June the numbers have remained around that level, with rust fungus evident on the primary leaf growth.

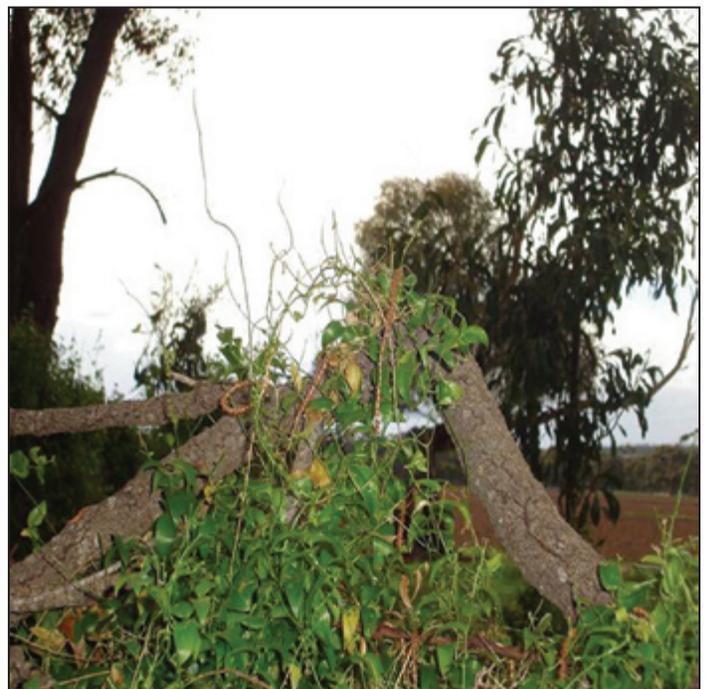
There have been attempts to establish the beetle on four other sites on the Lower Eyre Peninsula,

with out success. I have been working closely with Mick Neave from CSIRO Entomology and have determined that site selection is important in successfully establishing this agent. The beetle preference appears to be humid enclosed areas. Adult beetles are released at eye level and the site misted with water after release.

The leaf-eating beetle has proved a challenge to get established but the benefits of an early season grazer reducing initial bridal creeper growth followed by the demonstrated ability to coexist with the other agents has provided a high level of control at this one site.

Here's hoping we can replicate this success at other infestations.

Adrian Simpson
Project Officer Asparagus Weeds
Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board



Beetle damage. Note the defoliated stems protruding from the main column.

Photo : Adrian Simpson EP NRM

Burn baby Burn !



The community of Venus Bay in Victoria came together in May to celebrate a fantastic achievement in a very unconventional way.

Volunteers had spent the summer of 2006 / 2007 digging up bridal creeper tubers in the pristine bushland surrounding the town. Now it was time to get rid of them. Instead of simply burying them or sending them to the tip, the group build a pyre from woody weeds, also cleared from the region, placed a "tuber monster " made up entirely of bridal creeper tubers on top of it and ceremoniously lit it up.

The bonfire that followed can only be described as

spectacular. As it burnt Mae Adams and I presented volunteers with certificates of appreciations. Mae is the chair of the National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee and the driving force behind the Venus Bay weeding effort. The formalities concluded with the group touring the area where community members were able to show off their achievements. We all then returned to the bonfire and settled



down to a feast of homemade damper and cake.

The party really started when the musicians struck up a tune and the group settled down to an evening of eating, dancing, singing and stoking the flames with buckets of tubers. In total over 800kg of tubers went up in smoke that night.

An amazing effort from a very dedicated community.

Dennis Gannaway
National Asparagus Weeds Management Coordinator

Bridal Creeper in QLD

Bridal creeper is usually associated with the Southern States and a temperate climate but infestations have been found at four locations in Crows Nest Shire, Southern Queensland. The locations are; Pinelands, Crows nest, Pechey and Highfields. No doubt it occurs at many other locations.

The sites are a combination of original garden plantings, waste dumped in bush land and bird dispersal. The largest single clump found so far was 1-2 m² in a garden at Crows nest. The largest area infested is approximately 500m of road reserve at Pinelands. This infestation originated from a school which operated there 50 years ago. The road reserve vegetation is made up of Dry Rainforest regrowth with large emergent eucalypts. This area has been treated by spot spraying with Brushoff®. Smaller infestations have been removed manually.

Bridal creeper does not appear to be as abundant as the other three Asparagus weeds infesting the shire, *A. africanus*, *A. aethiopicus* and *A. officinalis*, but it is reasonable to say it could become a problem if ignored.

Bridal creeper has also been found in neighboring shires of Rosalie to the north and Toowoomba to the south.

Brochures are currently being distributed to local Landcare groups and the general public. This will allow them to correctly identify and treat the weed

 <p>CAN YOU RECOGNISE ASPARAGUS WEEDS?</p> <p>Bridal creeper <i>Asparagus asparagoides</i></p> <p>Leaves are broadly ovate and end in a point. Colour is a shiny green with a waxy feel. Length ranges between 10 to 20 cm and width from 4 to 10 cm. Leaves are borne in groups on small side branches spreading along the stem. Petioles are short and are back in early summer. The yellow spots shown in the picture are caused by the soil fungi associated with underground fungal agents. Aerial shoots emerge from the underground root mass in autumn in Mediterranean and temperate climates. The shoots will persist until killed by frosts or winter.</p> <p>Thick lateral roots containing the massive storage tubers. Up to 20 cm diameter. These aerial roots make up 90% of the plant biomass. Tubers range in size from 10 to 40 cm long and 5 to 20 cm wide.</p> <p>White, scarlet flowers appear in late winter to early spring. Green berries containing seed follow in October. Seedling is sold in November. Seed dispersed locally through bird eating berries and disturbing seed where they perch.</p>	<p>An A4 brochure depicting some of Australia's worst Asparagus weeds has been developed by the Committee.</p> <p>A copy can be downloaded from the bridal creeper web page at www.weeds.org.au/bridalcreeper/. Limited stocks of hard copies are available from Dennis Gannaway at no cost. Contact details are on page 1</p>
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Defeating the Weed Menace funding



Two major projects relating to the management of Asparagus weeds received significant funding in the last Defeating the Weed Menace funding round.

CSIRO Entomology received \$230 000.00 to continue the community based release of the three biological control agents used to manage bridal creeper. The funding will enable further releases to be made in New South Wales and Victoria and the evaluation of the project.

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Rangers NRM board were awarded \$61 700.00 for the strategic management of the Western Cape form of bridal creeper discovered growing in their region last year.

This was the last opportunity to access funds through this Federal Government initiative.

Funding opportunity closing soon

The call for funding applications for the Coastal and Marine Round 10 Envirofund has been made. Projects with a community focus and a value not exceeding \$50 000 will be considered. This round will be particularly pertinent to those of you battling Ground Asparagus along the Eastern Seaboard



Closing 20 July 07

Management efforts to control bridal creeper and other Asparagus weeds have received considerable support in past from this fund. Full details from the website

<http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund/>

The National Asparagus Weeds Management Coordinator is willing to help develop Envirofund projects relating to Asparagus weeds. Contact details on the front page.