The Bridal Creeper

newsletter of the national asparagus weeds management committee

national asparagus weeds management committee

A.asparagoides
A. africanus
A.densiflorus
A.declinatus
A.plumosus
A.scandens
A.virgatus

august 2005 vol 1 no.2

contents

Thank you !

To everybody who responded to the request for contributions to the Asparagus Weeds Manual. The response was wonderful with contributions coming in from across the country

newsletter funded by : -

Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia
An Australian Government Initiative

Government of South Australia
Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation

Spore water cleared for use

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has ruled that spore water, the infusion of the *Puccinia myrisphylli* rust spores and rain water used in the biological control of Bridal Creeper, does not require registration. The only restriction placed on its use is that it may not be packaged and sold as an end-user product.

This means that those keen spore spreaders who have been itching to use their misters and vehicle-based sprayers can finally get to use these toys.

Bev and Dean Overton on Kangaroo Island South Australia developed spore water. They were trying to find more efficient way of distributing rust spores than the traditional cut and rub method.

According to the Overton's, the first experiments involved biodegradable plastic bags full of the new concoction being flung from moving cars into roadside infestations! This basic method evolved over time to a point where spore water is now being sprayed from the back of a ute using an industrial sized spray unit. Spore water is very versatile. It can be used with any spray equipment ranging from hand held bottles to the ute-mounted equipment.

Raelene Kwong from the Department of Primary Industries, Frankston Victoria, is currently undertaking research into even better distribution methods. Rae and her team are looking at the technologies that could assist in the broad-scale application of biological control agents. This is the first of a two-year study, so real results are a little way off yet.

This is where you can help. Full instruction on how to make spore water are available at the following website **http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/.** The instructions are in a PowerPoint presentation, which is free to be used by anybody. Because there is a need to scientifically prove the effectiveness of this method, a monitoring protocol is also available from the website. Please use this protocol and return all finding to the national Bridal Creeper coordinator. The more we know, the better we can get at distributing rust and ultimately controlling the spread of Bridal Creeper.

Spore water only works effectively in areas with more than 400mm of rainfall. Please do not rely solely on this method but rather integrate it into a broad plan involving herbicides, other biocontrol agents and physical removal where possible.

Photos: Kanagroo Island APCB

Don't forget the safety gear when working with rust spores !

Beetles, next biological control of bc

Introducing the latest in the suite of biological control agents to be released onto Bridal Creeper.

Glen Firth (left) vice president of the Friends of Seaford Foreshore (Victoria) group and Dennis releasing beetles.
Photo : Greg Lefoe (DPI Victoria)

Crioceris sp. or, the leaf beetle, is being distributed throughout the country by officers from CSIRO Entomology and the Department of Primary Industries, Victoria. It was approved for release in May 2002. Since then it has been released at nursery sites in WA, SA and NSW.

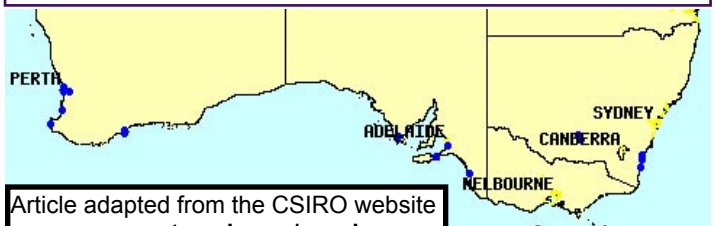
The leaf beetle damages Bridal Creeper by stripping the young stems of shoots and leaves. This action prevents Bridal Creeper from climbing, reducing fruit production. It is active in autumn and early winter (Feb-June/July) and is not expected to compete directly with the rust fungus and leafhopper for resources. Its action will complement that of the two other agents.

The adult lays its eggs perpendicularly, either singly or in groups of up to 10, on expanding shoots and leaves from autumn to early winter. Both the adults and larvae feed exclusively on the plant's young, expanding tissues.Older shoots or leaves are not utilized.

The beetle has one to two generations per year and survives the summer as an adult inside a pupal cocoon. It emerges after the first autumn rains.

The leaf beetle has a complicated life cycle and therefore is unsuited for rearing by community groups and schools. However, once established at several nursery sites, community groups could be trained to transfer larvae to new sites

Current release sites (blue dots)
Visit the CSIRO website for more details



Article adapted from the CSIRO website
www.ento.csiro.au/weeds

Money Money Money !

"Defeating the Weed Menace" is the Natural Heritage Trust's (NHT) initiative to tackle weeds of national significance. This includes the 20 listed as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), those on the Alert List and the recognised sleeper weeds.

It is expected that the next call for projects will be made towards the end of August. Watch the press and your email as a notice will be circulated as soon as the call for applications is made public.

While the criteria of eligibility are not yet available, it is expected that projects that have a regional focus will be rated more highly than those that have a narrow single location target. The projects can span a period of three years and need to meet the priority criteria as set down by the National Management Committees for each weed.

The National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee has identified the following as the priorities.

Establishment of nursery sites and redistribution of biocontrol agents for Bridal Creeper.

Containment of current infestations for all Asparagus weeds.

Creation of buffer zones between infestations and areas of high ecological value.

Eradication of new infestation, particularly emerging Asparagus weeds.

Mapping for strategic managment of Asparagus weed infestations.

Dennis Gannaway, National Bridal Creeper Management Coordinator, will be happy to discuss future projects with you. Contact details are on page 4.

Other funding currently available

Envirofund Round 7 (2005 Drought Recovery)
Eligibility criteria and applications forms available from -

http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund/index.html

School tackles asparagus fern

David Croft, Noxious Weeds Officer for the Sutherland Shire Council on the New South Wales coast, reports removing the biggest Asparagus fern *Asparagus aethiopicus* that he has ever seen. With help from the De La Salle High School students, the plant was cut back to ground level and the rhizome (crown) removed using a mattock and shovels. The tubers and roots were left in the ground. A large amount of the above ground material was removed to assist in access for a revegetation effort to follow. Some material was left to prevent soil erosion. This work took place in June near Wanda Beach at Cronulla.

Asparagus Fern is shade-loving preferring a canopy environment although it can grow in open areas. The plant takes advantage of any open or cleared soils in the understorey. Once established Asparagus Fern has the ability to spread throughout its environment suppressing the native plants growing in the understorey. Asparagus Fern thrives near urban areas where there are ample spaces in open bushland and many disturbed edges.

A fact sheet on the control of this weed is available from Sutherland Shire Bushcare (02) 9710 0333

Before - asparagus fern under the cap

After - large area of bare ground where fern was removed. Some above ground biomass was left to prevent soil erosion.

Photo David Croft

Don't forget

National Asparagus Weeds Management Workshop

November 10 and 11 2005

Adelaide

Copy of the brochure is available from
http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/
Registration closes soon

whats in a name ?

To coin a cliche' or two "a Bridal Creeper by any other name is still a Bridal Creeper".

A number of different names both scientific and common are used for this plant. So in order to keep the playing fields level and ensure that those at the grass roots (which includes most of us great unwashed) are not kept in the dark much longer, here is the correct name of the weed followed by a list of other names ascribed to it.

Correct
***Asparagus asparagoides* (L) Druce (Bridal Creeper)**

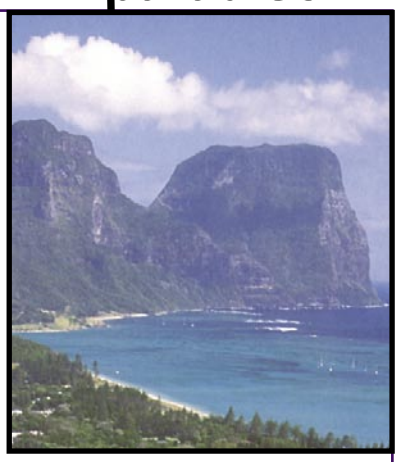
Incorrect
***Asparagus asparagoides* (L) Wight**

Other Common Names
bridal veil creeper, florists smilax, gnarboola, narba smilax, smilax asparagoides

Other scientific names
Asparagus medeoloides
Dracaena medeoloides
Elachanthera sewelliae
Luzariaga sewelliae
Medeola asparagoides
Myrsiphyllum asparagoides

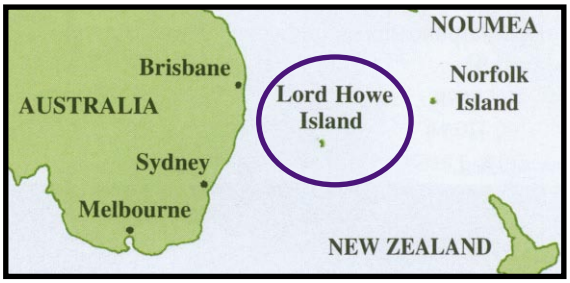
A creeper in paradise

Is there nowhere safe from this weed ?



Lord Howe Island (LHI) is a small volcanic island 750kms north east of Sydney. The beauty and ecological significance of the island has been recognised with its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Bridal Creeper has managed to make it to this remote spot. First recordings of the weed having escaped into the bush were made in 1962. The initial introduction is thought to have been in a bridal floral arrangement.

The weed does not grow as vigorously as on the mainland. It habits are more discrete with a more scattered distribution. The weed is managed annually by a team made up of LHI Rangers and volunteers from as far afield as New Zealand and South Australia. The team is hoping to achieve total eradication of this pest. Small infestations of *A plumosus* and *A. aethiopicus* are also present on the island.

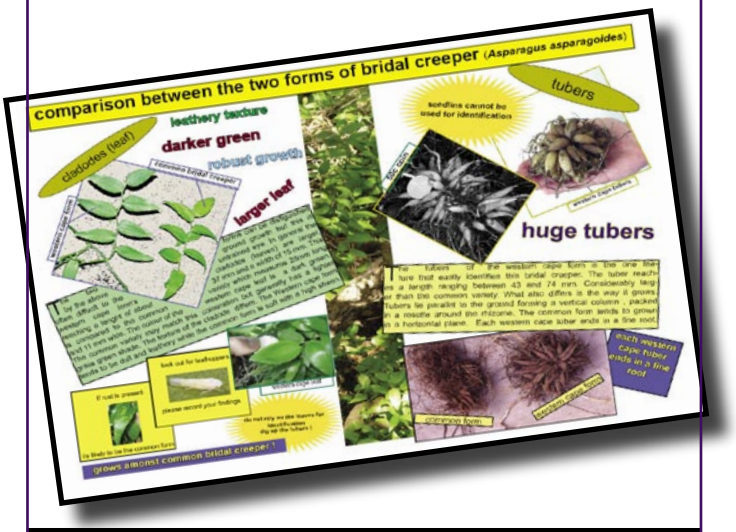


Western Cape form mapping project

The project to map the range of the newly identified Western Cape form of Bridal Creeper is well underway with funding coming from the first round of the NHT *"Defeating the Weed Menace"* initiative. The initial search area will be confined to the south east of South Australia and the south western corner of Victoria around the town of Nelson.

Robin Coles of Rural Solutions South Australia has been appointed as Project Officer. His tasks will include liaison with all stakeholders, correlation of field data and general overseeing of the mapping effort. It is expected that data collection will commence in September with the maps being finalised and ready for distribution in January 2006.

Robin is contactable on **(08) 8389 8817** or **coles.robin@saugov.sa.gov.au.**



The brochure being developed to be used by land managers to identify the Western Capefrom of Bridal Creeper. A copy will be available on the www.weeds.org webpage in September. A hard copy can be sent you, just send Dennis an email

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