

WEED of the MONTH

Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides*

Originally from Africa, Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), is a long lived highly invasive scrambling herb / vine. It is a Weed of National Significance.

This environmental weed is destroying large areas of native vegetation in southern Australia.

The flowers are pale green to white; blooming in early spring. Seeds germinate in autumn and winter in leaf litter and at soil depths of up to 100 mm.

Buried seed that does not germinate rots within two years, while seeds on the soil surface may be viable for at least three years.

Seeds are spread over large areas by animals and birds so preventing seed set is important and the best form of control. Manual removal should remove all underground rhizome that are capable of producing new plants.

When removing material off-site, rhizomes that come in to contact with the ground, on or off site, will regrow and re-shoot if not killed. Material can be composted or solarised and the same methods should be used for the fruit containing seeds.



Flowers



Infestation



Red berries



Clusters of rhizomes

Plants are spreading in areas of bush land around Lake Curalo and along the beach front. Bega Valley Shire Council have been using herbicides to control these outbreaks.

Constant follow up is needed to ensure eradication is effective.

Biological control is viewed as a preferred management option for Bridal Creeper infestations of this type.

Three biological control agents have been released in Australia. However, it will take many years for them to reduce the density of Bridal Creeper due to the huge reserves stored underground in tubers.

The native species Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*) has adult foliage with parallel venation similar to Bridal Creeper. However it can be distinguished because it has yellow to orange fruit while Bridal Creeper has red berries.

Eden Landcare holds weeding bees around the edges of Curalo Lake.

New members are welcome.
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