

Effect of pest plants (bridal veil) on remnant vegetation

Draft issue

Bridal veil (*Asparagus declinatus*) is a South African native that was introduced to Australia as an ornamental plant in the late 1800s (Waite 2001; Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation 2006). Bridal veil is a perennial climber that can grow over, and smoother native vegetation (Waite, 2001), as well as having a dense underground, tuberous root system that can outcompete native species. Previous research has shown sites with an infestation of Bridal veil to have a significant decline in native vegetation coverage, species richness and diversity, as well as reductions in seedling recruitment of native overstorey and woody plant species (Leah 2001, Bass and Lawrie 2003). Recent anecdotal reports suggest the past three years Bridal veil has been germinating earlier than originally documented (February, instead of April/May).

Bridal veil can be dispersed through a number of ways – from birds, to small-medium sized mammals (e.g. possums, bush rats), as well as lizards. Large birds such as currawongs can move seed up to 10km, whilst smaller birds can cause the in-fill of already infested areas, therefore increasing Bridal veil density (Bass and Lawrie 2003). Humans are also a major disperser of this weed with issues around the dumping of garden waste into the bush, and the unregulated selling of plants at markets. Dispersal can also be aided by water movement through creeks, streams and drains (Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation 2006).

Bridal veil is currently managed predominantly with herbicides and manual pulling (grubbing). These methods have pros and cons – grubbing is most effective, with a reduction in density over time, but it is very time consuming (Lawrie and Raymond 2007). Herbicide treatment, however, can cause off-target damage to native vegetation. Grazing is also sometimes used as a management tool, however this is limited to small areas. Little research has been conducted into the influence of fire on Bridal veil, but this is something that could be considered as a management option (Leah 2001, Waite 2001, Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation 2006).

Bridal veil is a declared weed species under the Natural Resource Management Act (2004) and a weed of national significance. It has a Weed Risk Rating of "High" using the SA Weed Risk Management Guide (Asparagus Weed Steering Committee Southern Hills Region 2006).

Bridal veil is currently wide spread across the Fleurieu. The key areas in the Fleurieu and Willunga Basin are Victor Harbor, Myponga, McLaren Flat / Blewitt Springs and there are also a number of historic sites in Cherry Gardens. There are also other known sites mentioned in previous Bridal veil reports in Moana, Happy Valley Reservoir and Blackwood (Wittunga). There is also a known infestation at Finnis/Milang, in the SAMDB NRM region (Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation 2006).

Managing Bridal veil is a complex issue, with variables such as property size, topography, access, and landholder capacity all contributing.

Subregions affected by the issue

- Fleurieu Peninsula

Conceptual models related to the issue

- Terrestrial landscape health
- Building capacity of natural resources managers

Read about regional conceptual models at:

naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtloftyranges/about-us/our-regions-plan/conceptual-models

What are these draft issues?

The information in this document relates to a list of draft issues that are impacting on the natural resources of the region.

The issues list has been developed based on information collected during a regional planning process, and a range of projects that the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board has undertaken.

New issues are added to the list as they become apparent, and as issues are addressed by projects they drop off the list. As the issues are constantly evolving, the information in this document may no longer be relevant. Check the current list for the most up-to-date issues:

naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtloftyranges/about-us/our-regions-plan/conceptual-models/sustainable-primary-production

Date this document created: 21/12/17

