

This native plant, Milkmaids *Burchardia umbellata* can be confused with Chinchinchee
(Photo: Kym Smith)



Chinchinchee look-alikes

A few native and introduced plants look similar to Chinchinchee. If unsure, wait until early spring to identify when flowering. The pictured Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) is one native look-alike.

How it spreads

Chinchinchee produces large amounts of seed that can spread over long distances. It's thought to spread via water runoff, earth moving/garden machinery, and by humans and animals. This is why weed hygiene is so important if you come across a patch. Make sure your clothes and shoes are not carrying the seeds/bulbils via soil before leaving the area.

Please help stop the spread of this devastating environmental and agricultural pest. Early intervention will save you time and money!

More information

To notify us of a new infestation, or for information on the management and control of Chinchinchee please contact your nearest Natural Resources Centre.

Eastwood

205 Greenhill Road
Eastwood 5063
T: 08 8273 9100

Willunga

5 Aldinga Road
Willunga 5172
T: 08 8550 3400

Gawler

43 High Street
Gawler East 5118
T: 08 8115 4600

Black Hill

115 Maryvale Road
Athelstone 5076
T: 08 8336 0901

For more information on weeds visit:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtloftyranges
www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity



Government of
South Australia



Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges

Many thanks to those who have contributed to the content of this brochure and towards controlling this pest across the Adelaide Hills. Special thanks to the South Para Biodiversity Group, Friends of Black Hill Morialta, Friends of Para Wirra, Kym Smith, Amanda Pearce, Liz Milner, Kieran Brewer and Peter Watton. Cover photo: Kym Smith.

Garden escape alert! Have you seen this plant?



Chinchinchee (*Ornithogalum thyrsoides*)

This invasive weed is toxic to stock and threatens bushland across the Adelaide Hills



A dense patch of Chinchinchee in July, showing early leaf emergence (Photo: Catherine Austin)



An infested paddock (Photo: Amanda Pearce)



Early Chinchinchee leaves and bulbs; note small bulbils growing from roots (Photo: Kym Smith)

What is Chinchinchee?

Chinchinchee (*Ornithogalum thyrsoides*) is an emerging weed that has escaped from gardens, is toxic to stock and invades intact bushland. It forms dense infestations, displaces native vegetation and threatens the integrity of natural ecosystems.

Chinchinchee lays dormant over summer and autumn, leaving the ground bare and vulnerable to erosion. It can produce large amounts of viable seed and rapidly establishes new populations. Some infestations are found well away from trails in intact scrub, so it appears to be spread by animals and humans. The plant is hardy and resistant to most traditional weed management solutions.

Chinchinchee directly threatens nationally endangered vegetation including two Spider Orchids and Grey Box grassy woodlands, and critical refuges for the nationally endangered Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Southern Brown Bandicoot.

In South Africa where it originates, Chinchinchee occupies a wide range of habitats. Here in South Australia there is potential for it to far exceed known populations, **so be aware of Chinchinchee and avoid planting it in your garden.**

Chinchinchee is sometimes referred to as 'Star of Bethlehem'. This name is more commonly used for *Ornithogalum umbellatum*. Other species in the *Ornithogalum* genus have the potential to become invasive weeds, like *Ornithogalum arabicum*. You may find a variety of *Ornithogalum* species at nurseries and florists, so when looking for white flowering plants, please consider alternatives. **Even cut flowers can go to seed.**

How to identify Chinchinchee

Chinchinchee:

- is a stiff upright **perennial bulb** up to 50 cm tall when flowering
- produces attractive **white flowers in spring and early summer**; each flower has 6 petals that are 2-2.5 cm long around a dark centre, with clusters of between 11 and 70 flowers per plant
- **leaves** emerge from the bulb in June, and die off in summer; they are hairless, fleshy, strappy, and grow to approximately 10-30 cm in length and 2-6 cm in width with around 6 leaves per adult plant
- **seeds** are very small and black with 'warts'; each mature plant can produce around 500 per season
- has an **underground bulb** with many fleshy layers which can grow to approximately 3 cm in diameter; mature plants produce bulbils along the roots, so take care when removing by hand.

For help with identification, contact your local Natural Resources Centre or take a flowering sample (must be completely sealed to prevent seed spread) to the State Herbarium at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Right: Volunteers hand weeding a newly discovered patch of Chinchinchee (Photo: Catherine Austin)

Control methods

Kill or remove the bulb and prevent seed set (generally October/ November), then follow up every year until the bulbs and seed bank is exhausted. This is essential for effective control.

Chemical application at early leaf emergence can deliver positive results, however the more effective herbicides have limited application in bushland due to off-target damage of native plants. If using herbicide, ensure it is used for its intended purpose and always follow label instructions.

To contain large infestations, consider brush-cutting at early flowering (prior to flower buds opening).

Although resource intensive, hand digging bulbs is an effective control method. **Prevent spread when disposing of plant material e.g. do not place any plant material in the green bin.**

For detailed advice on control methods, and disposing of this plant, contact your local Natural Resources Centre.

