

Factsheet: Bridal creeper (Asparagus asparagoides)

Very High Risk Weed for Kangaroo Island

Bridal creeper is an Alert Weed for Kangaroo Island. Notify the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board (https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ki/contact-us). Early detection and control are the best way to prevent the next widespread weed.

It is a declared plant (https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/137334/bridal_creeper_policy.pdf)for South Australia.

THE SITUATION AND WHAT TO DO

Bridal Creeper is native to South Africa and was introduced along with several other asparagus plants to Australia as an ornamental garden plants in the 19th Century. It is now recognised as a Weed of National Significance and is declared for control in South Australia.

Bridal creeper is a Weed of National Significance (https://weeds.org.au/lists/established/) and is a declared weed in South Australia under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz?path=%2FC%2FA%2FLANDSCAPE%20SOUTH%20AUSTRALIA%20

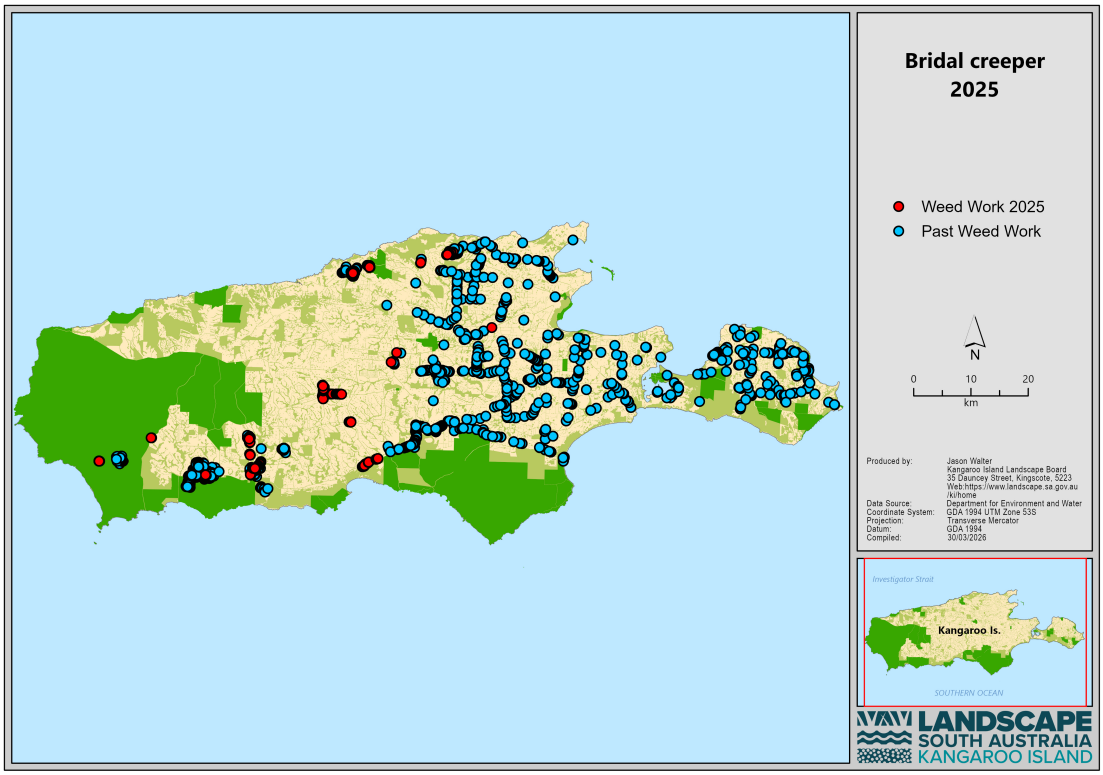
Bridal Creeper is a highly invasive weed that is abundant and widespread on the eastern end of Kangaroo Island with several large outlier populations in the western half of Kangaroo Island.

There has been a long history of control of bridal creeper on Kangaroo Island. Biological control agents, including the leafhopper and rust fungus, were released in the early 2000s. Significant

control efforts on the west end of the island have significantly reduced their size and their impact on biodiversity.

Control activities continue to focus on protecting priority sites and reducing impacts on native vegetation and biodiversity.

Help stop the spread and control bridal creeper on your property. Control can significantly reduce the spread and impacts of bridal creeper.



DESCRIPTION

- **Growth form:** perennial scrambling vine or climber with twisting stems up to about 3–4 m long, emerging annually from an extensive underground rhizome and tuber system.
- **Leaves:** shiny, bright green, broadly ovate leaf-like cladodes (flattened stems) about 10–70 mm long and 8–30 mm wide, borne alternately along slender stems.
- **Flowers:** small, white, fragrant flowers with six petals appearing mainly in late winter to spring.
- **Fruit:** pea-sized berries that are green when immature and ripen to red, typically containing 2–3 black seeds.
- **Seed:** seeds are black and shiny. They can remain viable in the soil for at least three years. A dense infestation can produce over 1000 berries per square meter, each containing several seeds, resulting in thousands of seeds produced per plant annually.

Bridal Creeper has a perennial root and rhizome system, with annual growth of stems and bright green glossy leaves above ground.

The root system makes up 80% of the plant and consists of tubers (or corms) grouped along a central rhizome. The tubers store water, energy and nutrients to aid survival over summer and to support rapid shoot growth in winter. Dormancy in dry years has also been observed, and plants

can persist through summer in wetter locations.

The recently introduced Western Cape Form is an Alert Weed on Kangaroo Island and must be reported if found. It has darker green foliage, larger corms like bridal veil, and is resistant to rust biocontrol.

IMPACTS

Bridal creeper is highly invasive weed that smothers native vegetation, reducing biodiversity and habitat for wildlife. Its large dense mats can make earth works and cultivation difficult and costly. This weed also increases fire risk by creating thick, dry ground cover during summer when foliage dies off, and can damage agricultural areas by encroaching on pastures and fences. Old infestations can be expensive and difficult to control.

CONTROL OPTIONS

Controlling bridal creeper is most effective using several methods and includes long?term follow?up over a large area.

Infestations can be managed by physical removal by digging out rhizomes and tubers by hand or with a machine. Any root fragments left in the soil will reshoot.

Herbicides are widely used and often the most cost-effective tool, with spot spraying or stem wiping recommended when plants are actively growing; follow?up treatments are needed over multiple seasons to reduce resprouting.

Regular monitoring and coordinated efforts across properties improve long?term success

Fire and grazing may also assist in some situations by reducing biomass or improving access for other controls.

Biological control agents such as the rust have been released across Kangaroo Island and can help reduce vigour and fruit production at sunny sites, but do not eliminate infestations on their own. Most locations should not require any additional rust fungus.

Permitted and on label herbicides and rates can be found on the PIRSA Weed Control Website (https://pir.sa.gov.au/crops-and-plants/weeds-and-plant-pests/declared-weeds/bridal_creeper):

DECLARATIONS

Bridal creeper is declared under the following sections of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz?path=%2FC%2FA%2FLANDSCAPE%20SOUTH%20AUSTRALIA%20
:

- **186(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads**
- **188(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant**
- **188(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods**
- **192(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties**
- **194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves**

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Declared Plant Policy - pir.sa.gov.au** (https://pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/137334/bridal_creeper_policy.pdf)

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- **Early Intervention Handbook - pir.sa.gov.au** (https://pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/388369/early-intervention-for-new-and-emerging-weeds-south-australian-handbook.pdf)
- **Weeds Australia - weeds.org.au** (https://weeds.org.au/profiles/bridal-creeper-veil/)

LANDSCAPE SOUTH AUSTRALIA KANGAROO ISLAND

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