

## Don't let them get away!

Invasive weeds are most effectively controlled when they and their numbers are small – a little weed control work today will save many dollars and days of work in years to come. As the number of infested areas of bridal creeper and asparagus fern in Tasmania is still relatively limited, now is the time to take action!

## Control that weed!

**Control methods** for asparagus weeds include physical removal, the selective application of herbicides and ongoing monitoring. The best solution will depend on the size and location of the infestation. Extreme care must be taken disposing of plants as asparagus weeds have the capacity to spread rapidly from segments of tubers and berries. Contact the Southern Regional Weed Management Officer at the DPIPWE on 1300 368 550 for advice on plant treatment and disposal.

## An ugly cousin



## asparagus fern

*Asparagus scandens*

But wait – there's more! Look out for asparagus fern (*Asparagus scandens*), a close relative of bridal creeper. This perennial twining vine is another garden escapee with dense tubers that out-compete other species. Unlike bridal creeper, asparagus fern does not die back over summer but grows year round, flowering and fruiting during late winter and early spring. This shady character prefers moist sites.

## Do the right thing

Weed waste dumped in bushland or local reserves gives pest plants a leg-up into new areas. Do the right thing, and dispose of your weed waste responsibly.

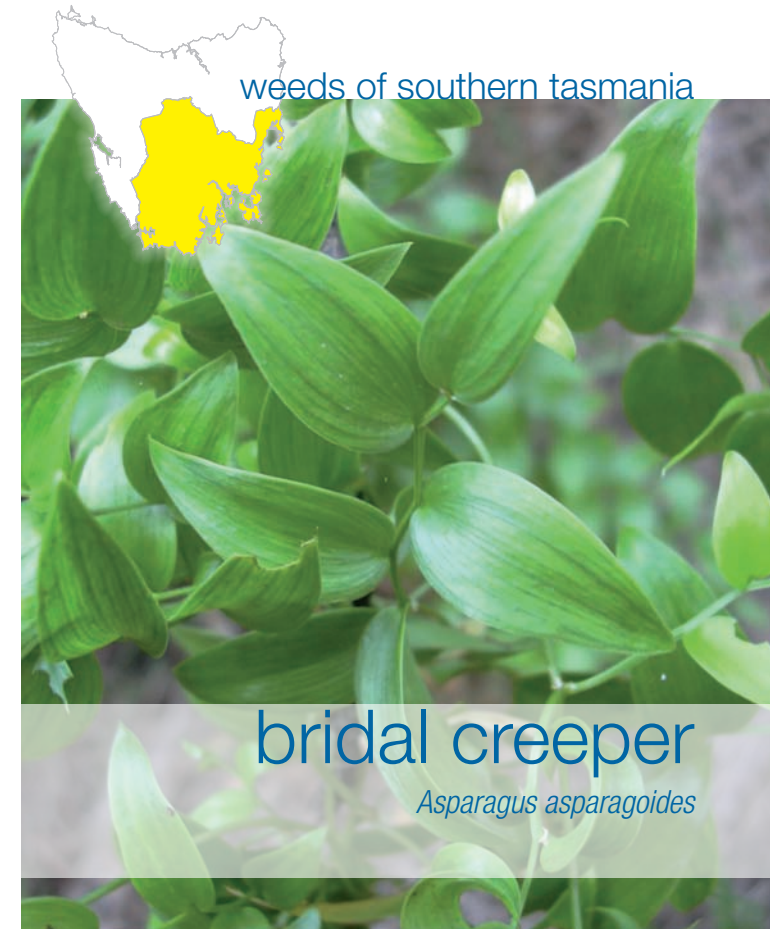
Weeds are easily spread by contaminated machinery and people – check your clothes, shoes, vehicles and other machinery for soil or plant matter that could be carrying weedy seeds or roots.

## Get informed

Bridal creeper and asparagus fern are significant weed threats for Southern Tasmania and are currently only found at a limited number of sites. To report a sighting or for more information contact your local Council office or DPIPWE on 1300 368 550.

Also visit [www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/weeds](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/weeds)

## weeds of southern tasmania



## bridal creeper

*Asparagus asparagoides*

### Impacts

Coastal areas, biodiversity, agriculture, forestry, irrigated agriculture (including orchards & vineyards), roadsides

### Current distribution in Southern Tasmania

**Isolated infestations:** Glenorchy (Granton), Clarence (Richmond, Montague Bay, Gordon's Hill Reserve), Hobart (Pierce's Reserve), Sorell (Dodges Ferry) and Kingborough (Conningham)

**Localised infestations:** Glamorgan Spring Bay (Triabunna, Swansea), Clarence (Dulcot, Droughty Point), Brighton (Jordan River) and Glenorchy (Dowsing Point)





weed warning

# bridal creeper

## Background

Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) entered Australia as a garden plant in the 1870s. With its spray of white flowers and tear drop-shaped leaves, bridal creeper was a favourite for wedding bouquets. The marriage went terribly wrong! Bridal creeper is now a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) and is regarded as one of the 20 worst weeds in Australia.

Since escaping cultivation, this weed has become an invader of coastal areas, wet and dry woodlands, riversides, and in mainland citrus orchards and pine plantations. Bridal creeper outcompetes understorey species and new seedlings with its curtain of thick lush foliage that crawls far and wide, and climbs to great heights. Beneath the ground, a dense tuberous root mass inhibits the growth of other plants, and cellars water and nutrients for years to come.

By early summer, as soils become dry, bridal creeper leaves turn yellow and fall, and stems die back. Don't be misled – beneath the ground the tuberous giant sleeps. With rejuvenating autumn rain, vibrant new growth appears.

## Get a positive ID

The shiny green leaves of this weed are sharply pointed, about 1-7cm long and up to 3cm wide with fine parallel veins. Leaves alternate on small branchlets, positioned off a slender central stem. At each node (or joint) the stem changes direction, and slightly zig zags.

Once well-established, bridal creeper will flower, generally from late winter to early spring. The white, 6 petalled flowers are scented and hang individually from the stem.

The pea-sized berries turn from green to dark red and sticky in late spring - and offer a smorgasbord for local birdlife. No surprise when bridal creeper emerges beneath favourite roosting perches! Other animals also eat the abundant fruit and aid the spread of seed. Approximately 1000 berries can be produced per square metre, each holding as many as 9 seeds that may germinate the following autumn or winter.

Tubers below are fleshy, up to about 4cm long and 2cm wide, and ending in thin roots. They are grouped together like a bunch of pointy grapes around a central rhizome (underground stem). Bridal creeper's root structure can account for up to 90% of its biomass. New plants are easily established from fragments of the root mat.

If you believe you have found a specimen of bridal creeper, collect a sample of it in a sealed bag and contact your local Council office or a DPI/PWE representative.



## Weed management – it's your responsibility

Many people unwittingly harbour pest plants in their gardens – some even actively grow them, knowing nothing of their weedy ways.

Although bridal creeper is not yet widespread in Tasmania, it may have already made its way onto your property.

This plant is a declared weed under Tasmania's *Weed Management Act 1999*. It is your responsibility under the Act to control bridal creeper on your land. Failure to remove it from your property could result in legal action. It is also illegal to distribute the plant or its seeds in any way, whether as cut flowers, in garden waste or on dirty equipment.

**Weeds are a growing problem.**

**Act now – make a plan and make a start!**

### Images:

1. The six-petaled flower of bridal creeper
2. A cluster of ripe berries
3. Bridal creeper's roots and tubers