

## Don't let them get away!

Invasive woody 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. Now is the time to take action!

## Control that weed!

African boxthorn is a stubborn weed, and long-term control is likely to involve the integration of a number of methods, including mechanical removal, herbicide application, replacement with more appropriate plants, and ongoing monitoring.

Where infestations are large, tackle isolated and outlying plants first for instant results.

**Mechanical removal** of entire plants, whether through cutting or bulldozing, is generally the most efficient means of initially controlling mature plants. The use of tracked equipment will avoid potential tyre punctures. As the plant resprouts from its extensive root network, this method needs to be followed up by chemical control. Care should be taken to destroy the woody material removed – unripe berries can still ripen on the cut branches, the sharp spines can provide shelter for pest species, and root fragments may resprout.

**Chemical control** is often achieved through foliar application of herbicides. Appropriate herbicides include glyphosate, triclopyr or triclopyr + picloram + amino pyralid. This method is only effective if the plants are actively growing, generally limiting this control type to autumn and spring, and should not be used on young plants less than 50cm tall. **Always read and follow the label**, wear protective equipment and avoid off-target damage during chemical control.

The best solution for your site will vary on the type and intensity of infestation – for advice and more details on control methods consult the DPIPW website ([www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/weeds](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/weeds)).

## ...but don't get carried away!

African boxthorn sometimes provides critical habitat for native animals. If you suspect that your boxthorn is sheltering native fauna, a staged removal must be undertaken, with the area revegetated using local native plants. Allow enough time for natives to establish and replace the lost habitat. **In coastal areas where Little penguins are present, treat boxthorn between May to August only.**

## Do the right thing

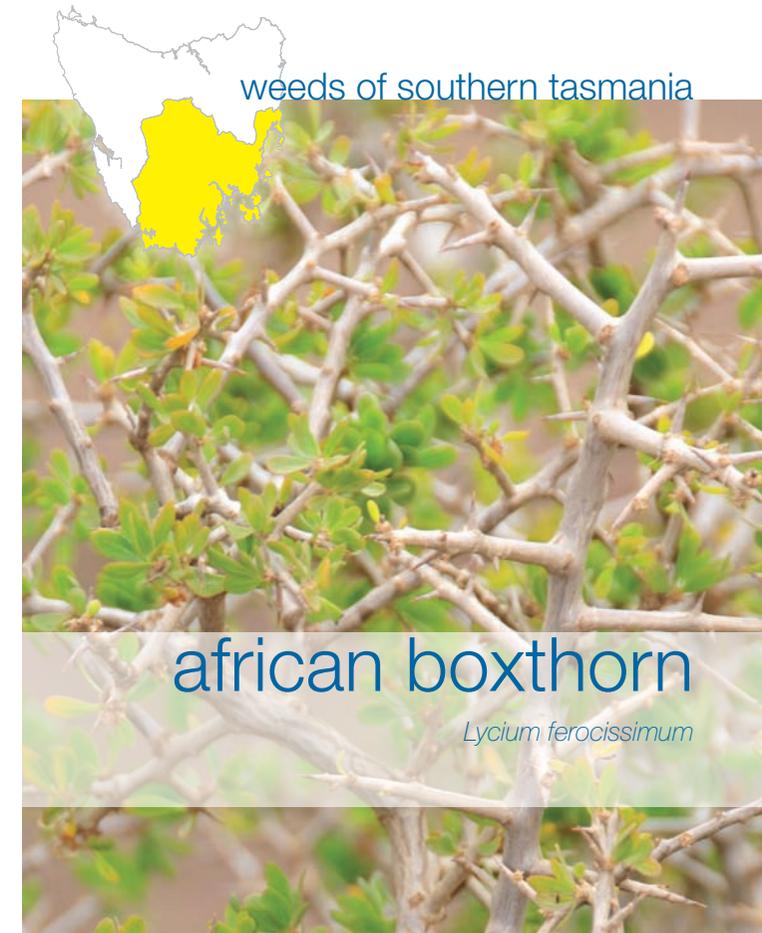
Weed waste dumped in bushland or local reserves gives pest plants a leg-up into new areas. Do the right thing, and dispose of your weed waste responsibly.

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.

And make sure tip-bound waste is properly secured – the seeds that blow off your trailer today will become the weeds that infest our environment tomorrow.

## Get informed

African boxthorn is a significant weed threat to Southern Tasmania. For more information contact your local Council office or DPIPW on 1300 368 550.



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## Impacts

Readily invades agricultural areas, riparian areas, coastlines and fencelines  
Reduces biodiversity and agricultural productivity

## Current distribution in Southern Tasmania

Widespread across drier areas of the region



weed warning

# african boxthorn



## Background

African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) was introduced to Australia from coastal South Africa in the 1800s, and was used in hedging and boundary fencing.

Since then, African boxthorn has spread well beyond these original hedgerows, and is a serious weed of agricultural land and native vegetation. Today, it's commonly seen haunting fence lines, colonising degraded pastures and neglected areas, and running along roadsides and creek beds.

Animals, especially birds, which eat the berries are key accomplices in spreading this weed far and wide. African boxthorn is also spread on dirty machinery and equipment, by water, through illegal dumping of cuttings and accidentally by people transporting unsecured loads of boxthorn waste.

As well as invading native bush and pasture areas, boxthorn provides a breeding ground for many pest species. The common house-fly is one of many pest insects that breeds and thrives within boxthorn fruit.

## Tough as nails

African boxthorn is no shrinking violet. It can grow in heavily degraded environments, on many different soil types including those affected by salinity. It bounces straight back from mechanical disturbances, like clearing or fire, resprouting from its extensive and deep-reaching root system. And heavily armoured with hefty spines, with leaves containing toxic compounds, unless you're a giraffe, it's pretty much inedible.

## Get a positive ID

African boxthorn is a large, woody, very spiky shrub which grows up to 5m tall and 3m wide. It has slightly fleshy green leaves that are up to 4cm long and 1cm wide, with branches that end in sharp spines which may reach 15cm in length.

If conditions are suitable, plants can flower all year round. Its bell-shaped flowers are white, sometimes with a purplish tinge, and around 1cm long. Fruits are orange-red, shiny round berries about a centimetre across, and can be found on the plants year round.

African boxthorn is occasionally mistaken for Tasmania's native tree violet, *Hymenanthera dentata*, which is also spiky and sometimes found in similar habitats. Boxthorn can be distinguished from tree violets by its fruit – the fruit of the tree violet are white, sometimes with blotches of green or purple, never red or orange. Boxthorn is also found growing near the native prickly box, *Bursaria spinosa* in dry bush – unlike boxthorn, prickly box has dry, papery fruits.

## Weed management – it's your responsibility

Many people unwittingly harbour this pest plant in their paddocks and gardens – some even actively grow it, knowing nothing of its weedy ways.

African boxthorn is a declared weed under Tasmania's *Weed Management Act 1999*. Failure to remove it from your property could result in legal action. It is your responsibility under the Act to control African boxthorn on your property. It is also illegal to distribute the plant or its seeds in any way, whether as cut flowers, cuttings, in contaminated stock feed, or on dirty equipment.

### Weeds are a growing problem.

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

### Images:

1. Foliage, flower buds, spines and fruit
2. Fruit
3. Flower