



Government
of South Australia

WEED IDENTIFICATION NOTES

ANIMAL AND PLANT CONTROL COMMISSION

BRIDAL CREEPER



Plant of A. asparagoides showing tubers at base



Foliage of A. asparagoides with unripe green berries



Ripe berries of A. asparagoides



Plant of A. declinatus

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Bridal creepers, *Asparagus asparagoides*, and *A. declinatus*, are perennial weeds of native vegetation. They form thick ground cover and canopies in native vegetation and are difficult to control chemically due to the risk of damage to the native species they grow amongst. Bridal creepers were introduced from South Africa and originally spread as ornamental garden escapees. *Asparagus declinatus* is sometimes called bridal veil.

Distribution

Eyre Peninsula	- widespread with heavy infestations in the south
Northern pastoral	- present in the southern Flinders Ranges
Northern ag districts / Yorke Peninsula	- common in native vegetation and roadsides in areas of higher rainfall
Murray Mallee	- widespread with heavier infestations in the south
South East	- widespread on roadsides, reserves and native vegetation
Central region	- common on roadsides and ungrazed areas

Asparagus declinatus is still uncommon, scattered on Yorke Peninsula, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island.

Impacts

Bridal creepers are not considered an agricultural weed because they are grazed by stock and do not persist in open paddocks. However they are major bushland weeds, competing with and replacing other vegetation by forming thick root mats and dense canopies and germinating faster than native species.

Recognition

Climbing perennial herbs to 3m with glossy oval leaves (*A. asparagoides*) or blue-green needle-like leaves (*A. declinatus*). The slender stems branch and twine around the support of neighbouring vegetation or manmade structures forming thick ground cover and climbing several meters into the canopy of trees.

Flowers are white and star shaped, forming round, red, sticky berries 6-10mm in diameter. A short thick rhizome gives rise to tuberous roots which form a dense mat under the ground.

Ecology/Biology

Bridal creepers will tolerate heavy shade and many soil types.

Stems grow quickly from June and flowering begins in August. Growth stops in very hot, dry periods, plants becoming dormant in order to survive the summer. New growth begins again in February.

Ripe fruit, on which birds feed and distribute the seed, can stay on the plant for many months. Seeds germinate in autumn; growth is slow in the first year until the root system is established.

Bridal creepers are also spread slowly by growth of the rhizome underground.

Further Information :

Parsons, W.T., Cuthbertson, E.G. (1992). *Noxious Weeds of Australia* . Inkata Press.

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For more advice on recognising and controlling bridal creepers, contact your local Animal and Plant Control Board :