



Climbing asparagus fern

Asparagus africanus

DECLARED CLASS 3



The problem

Climbing asparagus fern is another example of a garden plant wreaking havoc in the bush. As its name suggests, this plant is an accomplished climber and easily scrambles over other vegetation up to 12 m into the canopy. Naturalised in several coastal regions, it has the potential to smother trees and damage rainforests, vine scrubs and riparian vegetation.

Description

This African climber has narrow leaves and prickly stems that help it to clamber up and hang over other plants or supporting structure. Clusters of small, white flowers in spring are followed by green ripening to orange berries that are eaten and dispersed by birds. In absence of a host on which to climb, this weed can grow as a scrambling, low shrub.

Management

Problems with existing plants may be contained if birds are prevented from accessing the berries. Be sure to avoid the irresponsible practice of dumping excess plants, berries or plant pieces in bushland. Unwanted plants should be dug out by the roots and disposed of at the appropriate Council landfill site. Take care to remove the entire crown or underground stem of the plant and hang above the ground, to prevent the chance of regrowth.

This practice requires digging underneath the central growing point and lifting it out of the ground. Any regrowth that occurs can be kept under control by regular mowing or digging out.

Declaration details

Climbing asparagus fern is a declared Class 3 plant under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. The Act prohibits the supply or sale of Class 3 plants and may require their removal from environmentally significant areas.

Further information

Further information is available from the vegetation management/weed control/environmental staff at your local government.

TABLE 1 – HERBICIDES REGISTERED FOR THE CONTROL OF CLIMBING ASPARAGUS FERN

Method	Herbicide	Rate	Registration status	Comments
Basal bark spray	fluroxypyr (200 g/L)	35 mL per 1 L diesel/kerosene	PERMIT 7485	
Paint or spot spray crowns	Diesel	Apply neat	PERMIT 7485	Chemical control trials suggest cutting all stems near ground level and spraying the entire central crown of the plant with undiluted diesel, to the point of runoff gives good control. Careful application will ensure minimal risk to adjacent non-target plants while killing climbing asparagus fern.

Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

It is a requirement of a permit that all persons using the products covered by this off-label permit comply with the details and conditions listed in the permit. In addition read the herbicide label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with label directions. The above permit can be used by pest control operations, members of environmental groups such as Bushcare, Catchment Care, Coast Care and people employed as or working under supervision of local and state government officers.

