



Bridal veil: turning into a major environmental threat

Bridal veil (*Asparagus declinatus*) is becoming a major environmental weed in the Southern Mt Lofty Ranges.

Introduced from South Africa, it has spread as an ornamental plant from gardens to become a serious bush weed which is illegal to cultivate, sell or deliberately spread.

Bridal veil is very hard to control once established, and years of grubbing are required to finally remove it from an area.

“Bridal veil looks likely to become one of the worst environmental weeds in the Southern Mt Lofty Ranges if it’s not controlled soon,” declared Paula Peeters, Project Officer with the Asparagus Weeds Steering Committee, Southern Hills Region.

“It has also made its way onto the Eyre Peninsula,” she added.

Bridal veil is on Bush For Life sites in Cherry Gardens and Victor Harbor and bushcarers have been working hard to remove it from their sites.

Bridal veil has also been found close to a site in Milang.

It is important to find out if there are any new outbreaks in areas that we don’t know about.

If you find bridal veil on your site, or near your site (it may be necessary to patrol the external areas) please contact us at Bush For Life.

If you are unsure as to whether it is bridal veil or not, please bring in a sample to the office or contact your Regional Coordinator.

The Asparagus Weeds Steering Committee in the Southern Mt Lofty Ranges has produced a pamphlet, *Asparagus weed update*, Autumn 2002, reproduced below.

Bridal veil: a threat to the region

Bridal veil (*Asparagus declinatus*) has potential to become a worse environmental weed than bridal creeper in the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges.

Five outbreaks of this species have already been located at Victor Harbor, Finnis, Myponga, McLaren Flat and Cherry Gardens.

The largest infestation, near Victor Harbor, is scattered throughout an area of approximately 216 km².

Control of bridal veil using herbicide requires repeated applications over several years.

At present, physical removal by grubbing is the most effective control technique, although trials are underway to find ways of improving techniques of herbicide

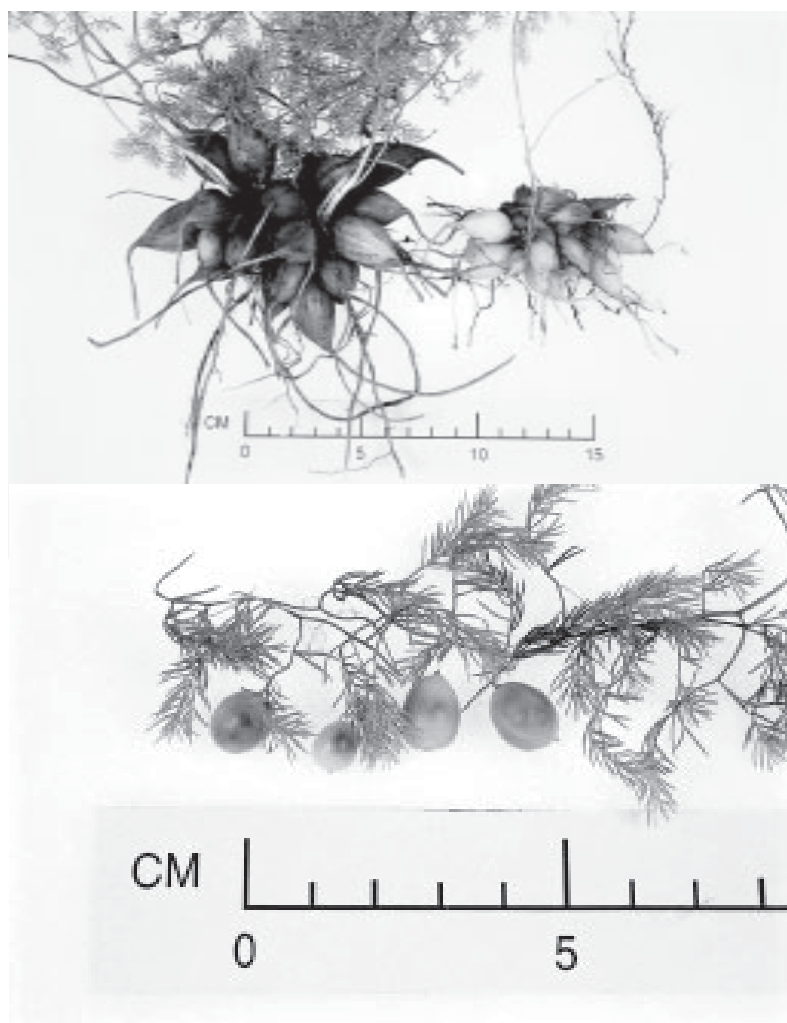
control.

Bridal Veil is closely related to bridal creeper and shares the many traits which make bridal creeper a successful bushland invader, including small berries attractive to birds and tubers which can survive dry periods.

However, unlike bridal creeper, bridal veil is not yet widespread throughout the region, therefore an opportunity exists to stop this weed before it is too late, and



Megan Long, Bush For Life volunteer with bridal veil removed from an Animal and Plant Control Board site at Finnis, on a Bush Action Team day last August.



Above: Bridal veil tubers.
Top: Close up of bridal veil fruits and foliage. Photos by John Virtue.

Bridal veil is best removed by carefully digging out the tubers with a screwdriver, securing them in a plastic bag, taking them from the site and placing them in a bin.

In 2000 the Cherry Gardens site received much needed help with the removal of this weed from the Bush Action Team, although the regular site carers still need to be alert to any new outbreaks.

before it spreads to additional areas of high conservation significance.

The control of bridal veil is one of the Asparagus Weeds Steering Committee’s (AWSC) highest priorities in 2002.

How you can help

Bridal veil is posing a serious threat to the region but there is still a chance that it may be contained.

Bridal veil has been all but eradicated at Cherry Gardens and McLaren Flat, although follow-up treatments are still required.

The main risk is from the infestations at Victor Harbor, Myponga and Finnis-Milang.

Should these infestations continue to spread we may find the weed invading priority conservation areas including Cox Scrub, Mt Billy or Deep Creek Conservation Parks, not to mention other bushland areas in between.

Mapping, grubbing and spraying of bridal veil will be a major focus of the AWSC in 2002.

Asparagus people!

The AWSC is a diverse group of people which includes residents, landholders and agency representatives from the Southern Hills Region.

The Project Officer is Paula Peeters and the Executive Officer is Martin Weidenbach (Fleurieu Animal and Plant Control Board).

Contact Paula at:

Asparagus Weeds Steering Committee, Southern Hills Region

c/- Fleurieu District NPWSA Office, PO Box 721, Victor Harbor SA 5211.

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Kerry Greaves

Bush For Life Field Support Officer

Stop the spread

You can help stop the spread of this weed by:

Ensuring that bridal veil is not growing on your property or in your local area.

Paying particular attention to treed areas and older, established gardens.

Contacting the Asparagus Weeds Steering Committee if you find bridal veil.

Telling your friends and neighbours about bridal veil.

Participating in the AWSC’s working bees to search for bridal veil in heritage scrub. (Contact Paula Peeters – see details at left).

Joining other volunteer groups who are already working to eradicate bridal veil:

- Friends of Newland Head Conservation Park;
- The Trees For Life Bush Action Team;
- Friends of Nurragi Reserve; and
- The Threatened Plant Action Group.



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