Current management and control options for asparagus weeds (*Asparagus* spp.) in Australia
Asparagus weeds
Management Manual

Current management and control options for asparagus weeds (Asparagus spp.) in Australia

Weeds of National Significance
2013
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Published by:
Office of Environment and Heritage
59–61 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232
Ph: (02) 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Ph: 131 555 (environment information and publications requests)
or 1300 361 967 (national parks, general environmental enquiries and publications requests)
Fax: (02) 9995 5999
TTY users: 133677, then ask for 131 555
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 131 555
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

For further information contact:
Pest and Ecological Management Unit
Parks and Wildlife Group
Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW)
Phone: 1300 361 967

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Principal authors and compilers

Kerinne Harvey, New South Wales, Office of Environment and Heritage
Hillary Cherry, New South Wales, Office of Environment and Heritage
Sarah Holland-Clift, Sydney, New South Wales, Environmental consultant
John Hargreaves, Warrnambool, Victoria, Environmental consultant

Case study authors

Sue Bower, Lord Howe Island Board, New South Wales
Kieran Brewer, South Australian Indigenous Flora, South Australia
Alan Carter, Strategic Weed Control and Vegetation Management, Queensland
Jill Campbell, Sunshine Beach Bushland Care, Queensland
Wendy Fuller, Narrawallee Bushcare Group, New South Wales
Robert Hanna, Conserv-Action Environmental Services, Victoria
Tracey Hardwicke, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia
Steve Hodgson, National Parks and Wildlife Service, New South Wales
Invasive Species and Native Animal Management Unit, Brisbane City Council, Queensland
Kay Jeffery, Iluka Landcare Group, New South Wales
Stuart McDonald, Byron Shire Council, New South Wales
Peter Michael, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, New South Wales
Alasdair Stratton, Shoalhaven City Council, New South Wales
Martyn Swain, Clarence Valley Council, New South Wales
Jeff Thomas, National Parks and Wildlife Service, New South Wales
Kerry Thompson, Shoalhaven City Council, New South Wales

Asparagus weeds management workshops

Workshops and discussions were held with weed managers and community volunteers in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia in 2012 and 2013. Contributions from over 400 dedicated asparagus weed managers provided valuable information on current management and control practices, much of which forms the basis of this manual. Many thanks to all those who contributed.

Valuable comments, information and review provided by

Nigel Ainsworth, Biosecurity Victoria, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria
Hank Bower, Lord Howe Island Board, New South Wales
Sue Bower, Lord Howe Island Board, New South Wales
David Cooke, Biosecurity South Australia, Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia
Tony Cook, NSW Department of Primary Industries, New South Wales
Adrian Hansen, Ecological Natural Area Management, Qld
John Hodgson, Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, Queensland
Kym Johnson, Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Queensland
David Lane, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania
Susan Lawrie, Flinders University, South Australia
Leigh Martin, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW
Stuart McDonald, Byron Shire Council, NSW
Louise Morin, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, ACT
Peter Michael, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, NSW
Sheldon Navie, Technigro, Queensland
Matthew Springall, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW
Greg Stewart, Natural Resource Management North, Tas
Peter Tucker, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia
Peter Turner, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW
Rory Wiadrowski, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia
Andrew Wills, Brisbane City Council, Queensland
Weeds are often referred to as an ‘intractable’ problem – that is, one that is difficult to deal with or solve. This, together with the size of the weed problem in Australia (yes, it’s big!), can result in weed management being relegated to the ‘too hard’ basket. Readers of this manual will be aware that, while weeds are a significant and difficult problem, it is critical that we do manage them to protect the things that we value, in particular, Australia’s unique environment.

Large and difficult problems require clever and effective solutions. The thousands of people working to tackle the weed problem in Australia are developing those solutions all the time. Over the last 20 or so years, we have built a well-stocked toolbox that contains strategic, effective tools and techniques to control weeds. This manual is yet another tool for the weed managers’ toolbox. It contains the collective understanding and experience of hundreds of asparagus weed managers from across the country, who have kindly provided their knowledge and expertise.

This manual provides a wealth of information on the biology, ecology and effective control of the seven asparagus Weeds of National Significance that have invaded southern and eastern Australia. Importantly, it also highlights other new and emerging asparagus weeds that can be eradicated now, to prevent them becoming part of the weed problem. The manual includes advice on planning, holistic management, restoration and monitoring, as well as case studies that provide real examples of the successes and challenges of asparagus weed control.

Because they are passionate about protecting our biodiversity, thousands of dedicated community volunteers and weed professionals are chipping away every day at the weed problem. This manual can now be added to that well-stocked toolbox that supports their excellent work. While it will require long-term effort and continued dedication, the weed problem is not intractable – but rather more tractable and feasible every day. Although it may not always seem like it, we are on the winning side of the weed battle – keep the pressure on!

With sincere thanks to weed managers everywhere,

Hillary Cherry
Weeds of National Significance Coordinator
June 2013
## Contents

National management vi
Using this manual vi
Asparagus weed network in Australia vii

### Section 1  Biology and threat

Understanding asparagus weeds 2
Identifying asparagus weeds 6
Where to find asparagus weeds 10
Biology, ecology and impacts of asparagus weeds in Australia 11

### Section 2  Planning and pre-control considerations

Plan before you control 30
The planning process 31
Checklist of steps to develop a weed management plan 32

### Section 3  Control methods

Choosing a control method 42
Native species that can be confused with asparagus weeds 43
Detailed overview of control methods 44

### Section 4  Holistic management of invasive vines and scramblers

A holistic approach to management 70
Management considerations in natural habitats invaded by asparagus weeds 73
Key management considerations 74

### Section 5  Follow-up, restoration and monitoring

Follow-up 78
Restoration 79
Monitoring 84

### Section 6  Case studies


### Section 7  Further information

Declared status of WoNS asparagus weeds in Australia 110
Safety, native vegetation and cultural heritage information 112
Further information and contacts 115
Glossary 118
References 119
Further reading 120
National management

The continued spread of asparagus weeds threatens Australia’s biodiversity, including endangered coastal and forest ecosystems. The Asparagus Weeds Strategic Plan (2012–2017) is a national Plan developed under the Australian Weeds Strategy as part of the Weeds of National Significance initiative. This Plan provides a framework to prevent the spread and reduce the impacts of asparagus weeds. Nationally coordinated implementation of the Plan, in conjunction with all stakeholders nationally, will allow for better protection of priority assets by providing tools and information, identifying management priorities, and fostering partnerships that lead to more strategic, collaborative management.

The Plan aspires to three goals:
1. New asparagus weed infestations are prevented from establishing.
2. Existing asparagus weed infestations are under strategic management.
3. There is increased capability and willingness to manage asparagus weeds.

These goals complement the Australian Weeds Strategy. Like the Australian Weeds Strategy, the Plan fosters a shared approach, and identifies efficiencies and collaborative actions that help to ensure existing resources can be allocated to achieve improved, strategic management outcomes. The Plan outlines measurable, targeted actions to allow progress towards its vision of ensuring that: ‘Australia’s environment is better protected from the negative impact of asparagus weeds’. The Plan is available at www.weeds.org.au/wons/asparagusweeds.

Using this manual

Who should use this manual?

This manual has been written to assist anyone who either wants or needs to manage asparagus weeds, from site managers, community groups, private landholders and volunteers to government agency staff. This manual is intended to help people make decisions about asparagus weeds management by providing a comprehensive guide.

This manual provides information on:

- Asparagus weeds and their impacts.
- Habitats invaded and their management considerations.
- How to choose an appropriate control method.
- How to plan management.
- Restoration, revegetation and repairing invaded habitats.
- Monitoring progress.
- Legislation and information for volunteers.
- Further resources.

How to use this manual

Sections can be read in isolation, or collectively if one’s goal is to comprehensively investigate specific topics. To increase the usability of this manual, the following have been provided:

- A checklist for the planning stage.
- A decision matrix – especially for selecting an appropriate control method.
- Advantages/disadvantages of each control method.
- Important considerations for management.
- Case studies.
- Contacts and references for more information.
Asparagus weed network in Australia

Many groups of people are involved in asparagus weed management in Australia across a range of levels. Part of effective management is understanding where you fit within the ‘asparagus weed network’ in Australia. The diagram below illustrates the diversity of people and agencies involved, and their relationships. Relevant contact details are provided in Section 7 of this manual, and a portion of these are on the Australian Government Caring for our Country web page www.nrm.gov.au.

Consult with other groups working on asparagus weeds in surrounding areas to help understand your potential role in asparagus weed management nationally, as well as within your state, region and locality. For example, management at individual sites can feed into local government pest management plans, which feed into regional pest strategies at the natural resource management (NRM) board and catchment management authority (CMA) scale. These in turn feed into the Asparagus Weeds Strategic Plan and the Australian Weed Strategy. Thus your actions benefit not just your site, but ultimately the regional, state and national effort.