

Cat's Claw Creeper

NSW State Priority Weed

Under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, all landholders have a "General Biosecurity Duty" to manage any "Biosecurity Risk" posed or likely to be posed by Priority Weeds. These weeds can impact on human health, the economy, the liveability of our City and the environment. Impacts can include allergies and other health issues, costs of control, loss of tourism value, degradation of natural landscapes, parks and recreation facilities, reduction of useful agricultural land and loss of primary production, loss of biodiversity and water quality.

A WEED OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The plant must be eradicated from the land and be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed; and the land must be kept free of the plant.

Scientific name

(Dolichandra unguis-cati syn. Macfadyena unguis-cati)

(Family: Bignoniaceae)

Description

Habit: A perennial woody vine with stems extending for 20 m or more. Plants have tubers and adventitious roots (roots arising from the shoots). The plant's name comes from the three-clawed tendril that helps the plant to climb.

Leaves: Leaves comprise two egg-shaped leaflets.

Flowers: Flowering in spring. The flowers are yellow with orange lines in the flower tube.

Fruit: Fruit contains numerous seeds with membranous wings.



Photo source: Martin Louis



Photo source: Dave Whiteman

Dispersal

The membranous wings on Cat's Claw seed aid dispersal, particularly by water and wind. Seed production is high and some seeds produce multiple seedlings. Established plants can reproduce from tubers and creeping stems. Detached tubers and cuttings can re-sprout in both moist and dry conditions.

Impacts

If left untreated the plant can grow to have very thick stems. Cat's Claw Creeper smothers and kills mature trees, opening up the canopy for other weeds. In areas where there are no trees to climb, it forms dense above-ground mats that prevent growth and germination of native vegetation. Cat's Claw Creeper can invade intact plant communities.

Current distribution

Lower Mountains – Springwood, Glenbrook, Escarpment (Cumberland Plains and Hawkesbury)

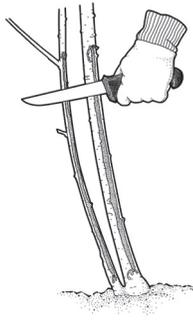
Control

- Hand-dig seedlings if you can remove all of the roots and the tuber.
- Scrape and paint with herbicide. It is best to scrape with a toothed instrument such as a wall board saw, then cut the aerial section about 50 cm above the ground. Make sure there is extensive scraping both above and below the cut, and that the herbicide is applied immediately.
- Drill and inject large stems.
- Spray with herbicide but only if there are no native plants nearby. A selective herbicide will avoid killing nearby native grasses.

Follow up treatments will be needed.



Hand Removal



Scrape and Paint



Stem Inject

NOTE: Spraying climbers is only effective in limited situations - that is, where there is dense weed growth and the growth is not too high. If the plant has grown too high, most of the spray will end up elsewhere and the target weed will get little coverage.

Plant this instead

Wonga Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*), Water Vine (*Cissus antarctica*), Old Man's Beard (*Clematis aristata*).

NOTE: Be aware that cultivated Clematis can be an environmental weed. For example, *Clematis montana* has been found aggressively invading some bushland reserves in the Upper Mountains.

Control illustrations by Virginia Bear.