

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED OF THE MONTH **Climbing Asparagus Fern (*Asparagus plumosus*)**

Common Names

Climbing Asparagus Fern, Ferny Asparagus, Asparagus Fern, Climbing Asparagus, Ornamental Asparagus

Family

Asparagaceae

Origin

South Africa

Description

A long lived and vigorous climber, Asparagus Fern has attractive soft, feathery 'leaves' that are actually stem segments that function as leaves. 'Leaves' are fern shaped and grow all the way up the long stems. Stems are green and glossy when young, and woody when mature. Thorns or spines grow all the way up the stems. Flowers are small, white/light green in colour, and appear on the ends of the 'leaves'. They develop into a rounded fruit that mature from green to black and contain 1-3 black seeds.

How do they spread?

Spread by seed, either dispersed by birds or in garden waste.

Why are they an issue?

They grow quickly and densely, blanketing the ground and making impenetrable walls up and over the native canopy. Makes for reduced bird habitat, decreases native plant recruitment, and makes areas very difficult to access and use.



Photo Credit: Carolyn Lewis



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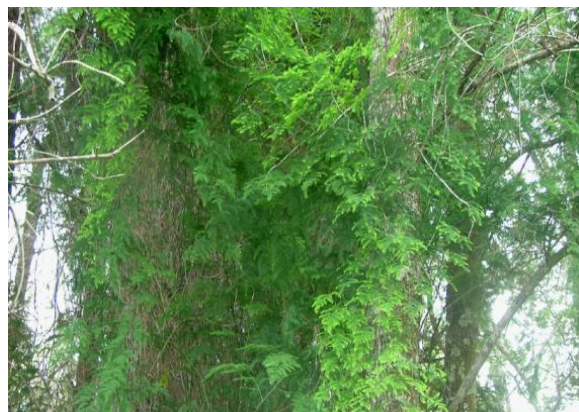


Photo Credit: Sheldon Navie

Where are they likely to occur?

Island wide

How can I control it?

1. Hand pull small plants, dig up roots and rhizomes where possible
2. Cut, stump/scrape stem. Gouge rhizome and paint: 1 part Glyphosate to 1.5 parts water
3. Foliar spot spray: only if no desirable foliage is nearby. Overall knapsack spray with 1 part Glyphosate to 50 parts water or 1-2g of Metsulfuron-methyl in 10L of water plus a surfactant. Best done between flowering and berries forming.



Photo Credit: Sheldon Navie

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

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