

# Bridal veil (*Asparagus declinatus*)

## Fact sheet

### What do they look like?

Bridal veil is a long-lived, summer-dormant plant. The green leaves are fine, feathery, scrambling and can be described as fern-like. Bridal veil is a weak climber and tends to cover the ground rather than climb up onto plants.

The tuber and the rhizomes take up 85% of the plant's mass. These tubers provide nutrients, water and food to the plant. The mat of tubers are so dense they prevent native seed germination and native plant recruitment.

Shoots appear after the first autumn rains in April/May and grow up to 2-3 m in length. In late winter, the bisexual flowers are produced and appear a greenish-white 5-8 mm in diameter.



The berries at first are greenish in colour and mature to white. They are oval in shape, approximately 10 mm in length and 7 mm wide. In a healthy plant you can expect to find 800 berries per square metre. There are 5-8 seeds per fruit so a

square metre could have a maximum of 6,400 seeds. The viability of these seeds is unknown.

The seeds are dispersed through ingestion by birds, mammals and lizards and can be spread hundreds of metres from the original source. Due to birds being a distributor for seeds, plants are usually found underneath trees or large shrubs.

### Why should bridal veil be controlled?

Bridal veil is native to South Africa and was brought to Australia as a decorative garden plant.

This plant is a highly aggressive and invasive environmental weed and it contributes to a decline in biodiversity in the areas in which it occurs. Bridal veil can smother native plants and prevent regeneration; and it causes a decline in bare ground, groundcover species and woody species.

In drought the leaves will yellow and growth is reduced but the tuber and rhizomes survive and the plant will re-emerge the following season.

### What are my responsibilities?

Bridal veil is declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. This means it is illegal to transport or sell this plant and all property owners have a responsibility to control bridal veil on their property. Residents who rent their properties also have obligations to control any weeds present. This also includes anyone who is leasing property unless other arrangements have been made.

Bridal veil has also been declared a weed of National significance (WoNS). This means it is considered to be one of the most problematic plant species in Australia.

## What are the best ways to control bridal veil?

Established infestations can be difficult to eliminate. Control may need to be repeated several times a year for several years. Controlling the weed depends on the size of the infestation.

### Chemical control

Large infestations of bridal veil are best controlled with herbicide.

The best time to spray is June to August when the plants are actively growing (green) but before the flowers appear. It is recommended to treat the plant with a glyphosate + metsulfuron-methyl (800mL + 3 g/100L) + wetting agent. Due to the fine leaves, adding an emulsified vegetable oil will help the herbicide stick to the plant. Follow up control is essential.

### Physical control

Small plants can be grubbed with a mattock making sure all tubers and rhizomes are removed and ensuring minimal soil disturbance is caused. Correct disposal of grubbed plants is essential to prevent further spread of this weed. Bag all plant material and place it in your red rubbish bin for deep burial at the dump.

### Slashing

Slashing the plant several times a year can slowly exhaust the tubers, but it can take up to 10 years to completely kill the weed.

### Grazing

Livestock grazing by sheep as an alternative method for control, reduces shoot biomass and prevents the plant from going to seed. The use of grazing as a control method is limited by the inability of one-off grazing events to reduce the long term health and viability of bridal veil infestations, plus the potential impact of livestock grazing on non-target, native plant species.

## Do you have bridal veil?

If you think you have bridal veil on your property, the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board can provide advice on control and management.



## More information

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