

# Help Protect NSW's Natural Environment from Environmental Weeds

A handbook for the Cut Flower and Foliage  
Industry and the *Biosecurity Act 2015*





## A handbook for the Cut Flower and Foliage Industry and the *Biosecurity Act 2015*

This handbook offers guidance on certain environmental priority weeds that must not be sold within the Cut Flower and Foliage Industry, along with an overview of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* is regulated under the NSW Act that governs biosecurity matters to protect the state of NSW from pests, diseases, and other biosecurity risks. It provides a framework for managing biosecurity threats to plant, animal, and human health within NSW.

Under the Act, pest plants that can have a negative impact on the environment, community or economy are regulated under the general biosecurity duty.

Engaging in the buying or selling of state and regional priority weeds as well as widespread weeds in NSW may be a violation of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, and individuals may be subject to fines.

# No Space for Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeds

## *Selling plants? Protect your business.*

Don't buy, sell or move plants, flowers or foliage that put NSW at risk. Plants that have the potential to damage the environment, economy, and communities within NSW are called 'priority weeds'. The sale and movement of priority weeds is restricted under the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*. Restrictions apply to all parts of the plant, and to cultivars and hybrids. Check NSW WeedWise for guidance and information at [weeds.dpi.gov.au](http://weeds.dpi.gov.au).

### Cut Flower and Foliage Industry Weed Key

STATE PRIORITY WEED MUST not be sold

STATE PRIORITY WEED MUST not be sold except under permitted condition

REGIONAL PRIORITY WEED THINK before you sell





WIDESPREAD WEED THINK before you sell

# GROUND ASPARAGUS

Scientific name: *Asparagus aethiopicus*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	up to 2 cm long, clusters on each branch are less dense than in foxtail fern making the 'arms' look messy, scruffy, fluffy or cloud-like
	<b>Stems</b>	short, sharp spines
	<b>Flowers</b>	creamy white to pale pink in clusters of 4-8
	<b>Berries</b>	glossy, 5-8 mm diameter, green to red and containing a single black seed



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Ground asparagus reproduces both by seed and vegetatively from its crown or corm.
- Fragments of the short, crown-forming rootstalks can generate new plants.
- Birds feed on its fruit and disperse the seed.
- Plants can shoot from the crown or parts of the crown and people can spread this weed by dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Outcompetes native plants for water and nutrients
- Smothers and kills small native herbs and shrubs
- Reduces habitat and restricts movement for native animals
- Changes soil and leaf litter composition, affecting soil life.



**MUST NOT BE SOLD**



Can only be sold in NSW if stems have been preserved with glycerine and surfactant, bleach and dye.

# BUNNY EARS

Scientific name: *Opuntia microdasys*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Pads</b>	round to oval shape, generally 6-15cm long and 4-12cm wide  Fleshy and covered in velvety hairs  Oblong to circular
	<b>Spines</b>	not present but has white, yellow or golden fluffy spots with fine, hair-like bristles (glochids).



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- New plants can grow from parts of the stem or fruit when they come in contact with the soil.
- Plant parts can be spread by water, sticking to animals and vehicles and people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Outcompetes native plants
- Limits movement of animals and people
- Competes with pasture plants reducing productivity
- Has barbed bristles which can easily detach and injure people and animals
- Can restrict recreational activities such as bushwalking and camping



**MUST NOT BE SOLD**




It is prohibited to import *Bunny Ears* into NSW or sell it in NSW. A person who contravenes this mandatory measure can be charged with an offence under s.25 of the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

# CHICKEN DANCE CACTUS

Scientific name: *Opuntia schickendantzii*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Pads</b>	dull green, oblong and flattened  fleshy and covered in velvety hairs.
	<b>Areoles</b>	are close together  are woolly and contain dense tufts
	<b>Flowers</b>	4–5 cm in diameter yellow, sometimes tinged with pink

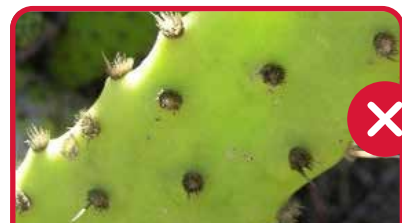


## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Mostly been spread by people growing it as an ornamental plant.
- New plants can grow from parts of the stem or fruit when they come in contact with the soil.
- These plant parts can be spread by water, sticking to animals or vehicles and by people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Causes painful injuries to people, livestock, working dogs and pets
- Injures and sometimes kill wildlife that get trapped in the spines
- Devalues wool and hides and prevent shearing
- Gets stuck around the mouth of lambs or calves and prevent them from feeding.



## MUST NOT BE SOLD



It is prohibited to import *Chicken dance cactus* into NSW or sell it in NSW. A person who contravenes this mandatory measure can be charged with an offence under s.25 of the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

# BLIND CACTUS

Scientific name: *Opuntia rufida*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Pads</b>	round to oval shape, generally 6-15cm long and 4-12cm wide; tend to be bigger than bunny ears
	<b>Spines</b>	not present, but has brown, reddish or cinnamon coloured fluffy spots with fine, hair-like prickles (glochids)



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Mostly been spread by people growing it as an ornamental plant.
- New plants can grow from parts of the stem or fruit when they come in contact with the soil.
- These plant parts can be spread by water, sticking to animals or vehicles and by people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Outcompetes native plants
- Limits movement of animals and people
- Competes with pasture plants reducing productivity
- Has barbed bristles which can injure people and animals
- Can restrict recreational activities such as bushwalking and camping.



## MUST NOT BE SOLD




It is prohibited to import *Blind cactus* into NSW or sell it in NSW. A person who contravenes this mandatory measure can be charged with an offence under s.25 of the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

# FOXTAIL FERN

Scientific name: *Asparagus densiflorus*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	needle-like, up to 2 cm long
	<b>Leaf Clusters</b>	denser and shorter than in ground asparagus, making each arm look like a long Christmas tree or a tentacle
	<b>Berries</b>	glossy green to red, 5-8 mm diameter



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- A perennial plant that escapes cultivation.
- It is difficult to control after it has established in the ground due to the extensive root system.
- Bird-dispersed fruit and shade tolerance are some of the reasons this ornamental plant is considered invasive.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Can regrow from small parts of roots and difficult to control once established due to an extensive root structure.
- Invades moist, low-light areas.
- Forms dense mats that suppress the germination of more desirable species.



## MUST NOT BE SOLD




It is prohibited to import *Asparagus densiflorus* into NSW or sell it in NSW. A person who contravenes this mandatory measure can be charged with an offence under s.25 of the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

# EVE'S NEEDLE CACTUS

Scientific name: *Austrocylindropuntia subulata*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Pads</b>	Elongated columns/cylinders up to 50cm long and 4-5cm diameter
	<b>Spines</b>	Grey-white, in groups of four, 8cm long  Light yellow, up to 1.5cm long on the monstrosa form
	<b>Leaves</b>	Green, curved and fleshy, up to 12cm long. Green or pink on the monstrosa form, up to 5cm long

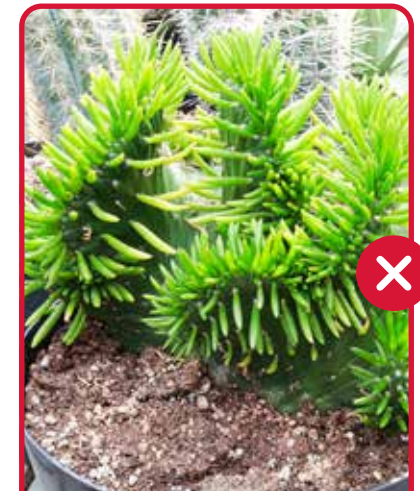


## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Mostly been spread by people growing it as an ornamental plant.
- New plants can grow from parts of the stem or fruit when they come in contact with the soil.
- These plant parts can be spread by water, sticking to animals or vehicles and by people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Cause painful injuries to people, livestock, working dogs and pets
- Injure and sometimes kill wildlife that get trapped in the spines
- Devalue wool and hides and prevent shearing
- Get stuck around the mouth of lambs or calves and prevent them from feeding.



## MUST NOT BE SOLD



It is prohibited to import *Eve's Needle cactus* into NSW or sell it in NSW. A person who contravenes this mandatory measure can be charged with an offence under s.25 of the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

# DARK-LEAVED OR BLACK WILLOW

Scientific name: *Salix nigra*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	bright green, slender, 4–10 cm long and 7–17 mm wide with toothed edges
	<b>Stems</b>	dark reddish-brown to reddish-grey in colour, to 1.5cm diameter.
	<b>Flowers</b>	tiny, yellow-green, drooping cylinder 4-12 cm long



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- *Salix nigra* is dioecious, which means it has separate male and female trees.
- They start producing seeds when around 10 years old and wind and water spread the light, fluffy seeds.
- Black willow can grow from small pieces of stems, twigs and even wood chips.
- Plant parts can float many kilometers downstream while new roots will grow in water.

**This is a serious environmental weed because it:**

- Outcompetes native plants for water and nutrients
- Reduces habitat and restricts movement for native animals
- Smother tree branches and cause them to fall
- Forms dense mats underground that prevents other plants from germinating.



**MUST NOT BE SOLD / PROHIBITED FROM SALE AND IMPORT.**

Can only be sold in NSW if the stems are traceable to an authorised seller operating under a Biosecurity Permit issued under s.333 and s.336 of the Biosecurity Act.

# TORTURED OR CORKSCREW WILLOW

Scientific name: *Salix matsudana*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	8–13 cm long, 10–25 mm wide, strongly contorted, with toothed edges.
	<b>Branches</b>	golden or tan in colour, twisting, spiralled, curly, contorted.
	<b>Flowers</b>	tiny, yellow-green, clustered densely along a drooping cylinder 1-2cm.



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- A small, deciduous tree introduced to Australia for stabilizing watercourses and road fill.
- Spread by broken twigs taking root downstream.
- Easily broken branches provide material for vegetative spread.

**This is a serious environmental weed because it:**

- In urban environments, willows have aggressive root systems that damage footpaths and drains.
- Invades watercourses, riverbanks and creekbanks.
- Can cause stream management problems and reduce watercourse environmental value.



**MUST NOT BE SOLD / PROHIBITED FROM SALE AND IMPORT.**






Can only be sold in NSW if the stems are traceable to an authorised seller operating under a Biosecurity Permit issued under s.333 and s.336 of the Biosecurity Act.

# CLIMBING ASPARAGUS FERN

Scientific name: *Asparagus plumosus*

STATE PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Habit</b>	fern-like with flattened branches
	<b>Leaves</b>	fine, needle-like, 0.5 mm wide, to 7 mm long, in clusters of ten
	<b>Stems</b>	spineless
	<b>Flowers</b>	greenish white, single or in pairs on stems
	<b>Berries</b>	4-5 mm diameter, glossy green when unripe, black when ripe like a peppercorn, contain 1-3 black seeds



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Climbing asparagus fern can spread from seed or plant parts (rhizomes, or root fragments).
- Seeds are spread by water and animals that eat the fruit and then pass the seeds.
- Root fragments are spread by dumping of green waste, deliberate planting in gardens and contaminated machinery or vehicles.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Outcompetes native plants for water and nutrients
- Reduces habitat and restricts movement for native animals
- Smother tree branches and cause them to fall
- Forms dense mats underground that prevents other plants from germinating.



## MUST NOT BE SOLD

Can only be sold in NSW if stems have been preserved with glycerine and surfactant, bleach and dye



## BIOSECURITY DIRECTION

If you are found buying or selling regional priority and widespread weeds, you will be given the chance to cease the activity, or given the option to show:

1. *how you've minimised the risk created by the plant*
2. *that you've communicated to your customers that the plant creates a risk to the environment, economy and community.*
3. *that the plant is not capable of regenerating or reproducing (by providing a sample for testing)*

If you can't show these things, you may be given a biosecurity direction that tells you what you must do to minimise the risks created by the plant. If you don't comply with the biosecurity direction an authorised officer could seize the plants and give you an on-the-spot penalty infringement notice of \$1000.



**Privet** (broad & narrow-leaf)



**Pampas Grass**







**Balloon Vine**

# ASPARAGUS FERN

Scientific name: *Asparagus virgatus*

REGIONAL PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Habit</b>	branching stems with feathery, fern-like leaves arranged like a wispy broom at the stem tips and curved upwards
	<b>Leaves</b>	soft, hairless, cylindrical and relatively small (3-15 mm long and about 0.5 mm wide)
	<b>Berries</b>	4-6mm diameter, green when unripe, orange when ripe, dangle on slender stems
	<b>Flowers</b>	small, greenish white



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Primarily reproduces from seed but can also spread vegetatively from stems.
- Fruit are spread by birds, foxes, reptiles and other animals that can deposit seeds far from the parent plants.
- Fruit are also spread in water and garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Invades a wide range of coastal and sub-coastal plant communities, in areas north from Sydney.
- Competes with native ground cover and understory plants by forming dense infestations.
- Competes with germinating plants and inhibits water penetration.
- Can form very large, continuous infestations.



## SHOULD NOT BE SOLD




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# PAMPAS GRASS

Scientific name: *Cortaderia species*

REGIONAL PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	finely serrated on the edges, dull green, upright and arched (common pampas), bright green, arching with leaf tips touching the ground (pink pampas).
	<b>Roots</b>	Grey-white, in groups of four, 8cm long  Light yellow, up to 1.5cm long on the monstrosa form.
	<b>Flowers</b>	up to 80 cm long, white, pink or mauve (common pampas). Pink when young, fading to dark brown (pink pampas).



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Wind spreads the seed. Garden plants are often the source of new infestations
- Pampas grasses can spread out via rhizomes (underground stems).
- Common pampas grass has female and hermaphrodite plants. The female plants produce more seeds if they are pollinated by a hermaphrodite plant.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Outcompetes native vegetation
- Is a fire hazard
- Harbours vermin
- Could threaten forestry



Chemically treated stems

## SHOULD NOT BE SOLD

Stems and seed heads may be sold within NSW provided they have undergone gamma radiation treatment, and sellers are required to furnish supporting documentation.






# MING ASPARAGUS

Scientific name: *Asparagus macowanii*

REGIONAL PRIORITY WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Habit</b>	fern-like appearance
	<b>Leaves</b>	needle-like, hairless, usually slightly curved, 12-25 mm long and about 0.5 mm wide, clustered densely giving 'pom pom' appearance especially near ends of stems.
	<b>Berries</b>	7-10 mm diameter, rounded, green when unripe, purple-blue to pinkish-red when ripe, contain 1-2 seeds.
	<b>Flowers</b>	white to cream in dense clusters



### SHOULD NOT BE SOLD

Can only be sold if the flowers, berries and roots have been removed

## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Primarily reproduces from seed but can also spread vegetatively from the roots.
- Flowering chiefly occurs in spring and early summer. Fruit set occurs from spring to summer, but fruit can be present year-round.
- Fruit are spread by birds, foxes, reptiles and other animals that can deposit seeds far from the parent plants.
- Fruit are also spread by water and dumping garden waste.

**This is a serious environmental weed because it:**


- Invades a wide range of coastal and sub-coastal plant communities
- Competes with native ground cover and understorey by forming dense infestations that can smother and prevent the germination and establishment of other plants.
- Can attain very large and continuous infestations.

# PRIVETS (BROAD & NARROW-LEAF)

Scientific name: *Ligustrum lucidum*,  
*Ligustrum sinense*.

WIDESPREAD WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Leaves</b>	broad-leaf privet: glossy, 4-24 cm long, 2.5-8 cm wide  narrow-leaf privet: 2-7 cm long, 1-3 cm wide, can be hairy
	<b>Berries</b>	bluish-black, not shiny, 5-10 mm diameter, in large clusters, often with a waxy coating.
	<b>Flowers</b>	~6 mm wide, in large clusters at tip of stems



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Seeds are commonly spread by fruit-eating birds.
- Privet seedlings often germinate in clusters, as a result of birds regurgitating the seeds.
- Birds and rabbits assist germination by removal of the soft coating around the seed.
- Privets are also spread through the sale of garden plants from nurseries and markets and the sale of foliage in floral arrangements containing fruit and seeds.

**This is a serious environmental weed because it:**

- Invades native and plantation forest industries, orchards, and pastures.
- Threatens biodiversity.
- Pollen causes allergic reactions and hay fever. Berries and leaves are mildly toxic to humans and livestock.



### SHOULD NOT BE SOLD




Can only be sold if the flowers, berries and roots have been removed

# TURKEY RHUBARB

Scientific name: *Acetosa sagittata*

WIDESPREAD WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Habit</b>	climbing or scrambling vine.
	<b>Leaves</b>	arrow-shaped, slightly fleshy, 2-10 cm long and 1-7 cm wide
	<b>Fruit</b>	three papery wings 4-7 mm long, 6-10 mm wide, which turn from green to pink to brown as they mature.



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Turkey rhubarb can produce fruit within one year of germination. It produces many seeds which can remain dormant for at least 2 years.
- Seeds are spread by wind, water and by people dumping garden waste.
- This plant reproduces vegetatively by tubers and stems. These are spread by water, moving contaminated soil and by people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:





- Is highly invasive, growing vigorously during spring and summer.
- Forms dense tangles that smother ground flora and small shrubs.

# BALLOON VINE

Scientific name: *Cardiospermum grandiflorum*

WIDESPREAD WEED

## Distinguishing Features:

	<b>Habit</b>	vine with hairy stems.
	<b>Leaves</b>	made up of 9 leaflets, sometimes have a curly tendrils at their base.
	<b>Fruit</b>	45-65 mm long, 30-45 mm wide, inflated, papery and look like balloons with a pointy tip.
	<b>Flowers</b>	1-2 cm wide, have four white petals, grow in clusters.



## Reproduction & Dispersal:

- Most balloon vine spread is by seed. The seeds sprout above the ground rather than in the soil. They can remain viable for up to two years if they remain moist. Viability is lost when they dry out.
- The fruit can float and remain viable in freshwater or seawater for at least 6 months.
- Seeds are also spread by the wind and by people dumping garden waste.

## This is a serious environmental weed because it:

- Smothers other plants limiting their growth or killing them.
- Brings down branches and trees which collapse under the weight of the vines.
- Reduces food and shelter for native animals.
- Harbours pests and diseases.



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For more information contact Strathfield  
Biosecurity Weeds Officer on 02 9748 9999 or  
Biosecurity Helpline on 1800 680 244 or visit:  
[weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au) or download the free  
**NSW WeedWise** and **WeedSCAN** apps

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