

environmental weeds

Weedy vines on the South Coast

VINES



Many vines grown as ornamentals in our gardens have escaped into the bush around towns and farms, where they grow over the top of other plants, blocking the sunlight from their leaves, and weakening or even killing them. Most of them can smother groundcovers and shrubs and the larger species climb high into the canopy where they may smother trees. Few of these vines are listed as noxious weeds as they are generally not a problem for agriculture, but some of them are listed as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) because of the damage their rampant growth can do to natural ecosystems. This leaflet covers some of the worst weedy vines of the south coast.

The best way to help prevent the spread of weedy vines is not to grow them in your garden. Many have fleshy fruits that are dispersed over long distances by birds, or light, wind-blown seed, so they are well adapted to jumping the garden fence. There are many attractive south coast native climbers or less invasive exotics that could be used instead. A few are shown at the end of this leaflet, and your local nursery may be able to suggest others.

Control of weedy vines is generally by cutting or scraping the stems at the base of the plant and painting with a herbicide which is approved for this purpose, or hand pulling of small plants. Spraying



A carpet of dolichos pea seedlings after fire in Merimbula

can be damaging to surrounding vegetation, as can pulling the vines down out of the plants they are climbing over. Fires provide a great opportunity to get rid of weedy vines, because they bring the foliage back down to ground level, but if control is not done at this stage, then the results can be worse than the original infestation.



The same area 2 years later



Dolichos pea (*Dipogon lignosus*)



Black-eyed Susan (*Thunbergia alata*)

Black-eyed Susan (*Thunbergia alata*) spreads mostly vegetatively from dumped garden waste, but occasionally plants produce seed as well.



Morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*)

Morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*) is another rampant vine that rarely produces seed in Australia. However, this does not seem to hinder its spread!



Mile-a-minute (*Ipomoea cairica*)

Weedy mile-a-minute (*Ipomoea cairica*) also spreads mostly vegetatively, but has managed to cover large areas on some off-shore islands. A native vine, swamp bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) has very similar flowers to mile-a-minute and morning glory but they are pink, not mauve or blue, and it only grows on swamp edges.



Banana passionfruit (*Passiflora tarminiana*)

Banana passionfruit (*Passiflora tarminiana*) has elongated yellow edible fruit but is grown more for its flowers. Other passionfruit species, including the edible black passionfruit, also spread into the bush when birds eat the fruits.



Climbing asparagus

Climbing asparagus (*Asparagus*) weeds in the asparagus family. Weeds of National Significance south coast than the widespread creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*).



Moth vine (*Araujia sericifera*)

Moth vine (*Araujia sericifera*) is seldom deliberately planted these days, but the seed, released from leathery green choko-like capsules, may blow in from bushland, where it is now one of our commonest weedy vines.



Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*)

Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) has fleshy leaves and long dangling sprays of white flowers. It is particularly hard to eliminate as aerial tubers formed on the stems drop to the ground and produce new plants. It is listed as a Weed of National Significance.



J Miles

Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)

Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) is very popular because of its sweet scented flowers which age from white to cream. Its black berries are spread by birds and it is very invasive in moist bush, such as creek banks and shady slopes.



J Miles

Bluebell creeper (*Billardiera heterophylla*)

Bluebell creeper (*Billardiera heterophylla*, formerly called *Sollya heterophylla*) has been promoted as a native plant, but it hails from Western Australia and is proving quite invasive in Victoria and NSW. It is a rounded shrub or wiry-stemmed small climber and can grow in quite dry bush. It is also spread by birds.



J Miles

Asparagus (*Asparagus scandens*)

Asparagus scandens is one of many which have been listed as weeds. It is less common on the south coast than other species. It is a noxious weed (bridal creeper).



J Miles

Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*)

Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) is also rarely deliberately planted now, but was obviously a popular hardy garden plant in the past. It is a common invader of damp shady areas like river banks. Unusually, winter is the main flowering period.



Climbing groundsel (*Senecio angulatus*)

Climbing groundsel (*Senecio angulatus*) is still popular in coastal gardens for its salt and drought tolerance, but it is equally weedy. Like cape ivy it produces light wind-blown seed. The similar *Senecio tamoides* has leaves which are between those of climbing groundsel and cape ivy in size and fleshiness.



J Miles

English ivy (*Hedera helix*)

English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is not related to cape ivy. Its seeds are contained in fleshy fruits, which are produced in abundance by plants growing in full sun. It produces three-lobed leaves on the lower parts of the plant and the triangular leaves shown here at the fruiting tips.



J Miles

St Vincent lilac (*Solanum seaforthianum*)

St Vincent lilac (*Solanum seaforthianum*) is not yet a well established weedy vine on the south coast, but the occasional plant in bush suggests that it could become weedier when it has been planted in gardens for longer. The berries are bright red.



Milk vine

native look-alike

for more information please contact:

Illawarra District Noxious

Weeds Authority

(02) 4233 1129

Shoalhaven City Council

(02) 4429 3111

Eurobodalla Shire Council

(02) 4474 1000

Bega Valley Shire Council

(02) 6499 2222

Some native vines

There are many native vines growing in bush on the south coast and some of these can be very vigorous and smother other plants in the same way as the garden escapees. This is particularly likely to happen after a disturbance such as fire or flooding damages other vegetation or when the tree canopy is opened by development next to a gully where these plants grow. Weakening or killing of the eucalypt canopy by bell miner (bellbird) assisted dieback, letting more sunlight through to the lower vegetation layers, can also cause rampant native vine growth.

The most vigorous native vines which are most often mistaken for weeds are shown here, but there are many others. If uncertain about the identity of a vine which is behaving in a weedy manner, get it properly identified before taking action to remove or control it. Your local Council weeds officers can help with this.

Native grape or water vine (*Cissus hypoglauca*) is the most common rampant native vine. Its leaves are composed of several (usually 5) long-stemmed leaflets.

Milk vine (*Marsdenia rostrata*) is also very common. It could be mistaken for the weedy moth vine but has the underside of the leaf pale green, not whitish, and its fruits are smaller and not choko-like. It has similar wind-blown seed with a fluffy parachute of white hairs. Fruits in the photo have opened and shed the seed.



Native grape



Kangaroo grape

Kangaroo grape (*Cissus antarctica*) is also very vigorous. It has similar purple-black fruits to native grape.

Common silkpod or monkey rope (*Parsonsia straminea*) often grows in wet forests close to the coast, where it festoons trees. The long cigar-shaped fruits and leaves without a heart-shaped base distinguish it from moth vine. Juvenile plants climb tree trunks in a similar way to English ivy, clinging to the bark, but often have purplish leaves, which ivy does not.



Common silkpod

✓ Grow these instead*

Here are a few suggestions for native vines which are suitable for south coast gardens.



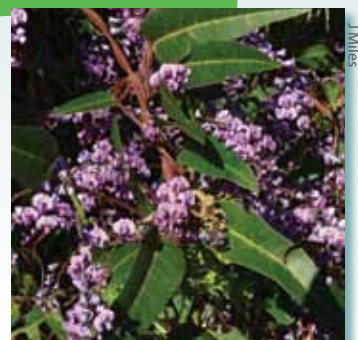
Wonga vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) is a vigorous vine with cream flowers. White and yellow flowered cultivars are available too.



Gum vine (*Aphanopetalum resinosum*) is very vigorous and has 4-petalled cream flowers in spring.



Running postman (*Kennedia rubicunda*) is a smaller vine with attractive rusty new growth.



Native sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) has a number of cultivars, including a white flowered form.