

Climbing asparagus

Asparagus scandens



Identification

- Wiry, evergreen, scrambling or climbing vine with up to 4 m long stems and fine feathery leaves
- Small, white flowers appear on stalks in spring and early summer
- Round, orange berries in summer and autumn
- Whitish underground tubers



Climbing asparagus Photo J. Sullivan



Climbing asparagus berries Photo: C. Howell

Where is it found?

In native and exotic forest and scrub, under hedges and in waste places; ranging from dry to wet soil.

Why is it a problem?

It establishes easily in the open as well as in the shade, and can form dense patches, smothering ground and forest under-storey vegetation. Birds disperse the seeds and the long-lived tubers can be shifted around with soil and garden waste.

Similar species

Asparagus fern (Asparagus setaceus) is similar but has very fine leaves, shorter stems and a fern-like appearance.

Status

Climbing asparagus has been banned from sale, propagation or distribution.

Control

Pull out small plants including tubers. For bigger plants, cut the tops off and dig out tubers making sure all tubers are found as these will re-sprout. Check the area for re-growth for a few years. Dispose of plants and tubers in a landfill or burn them.

For herbicide control methods refer to www.weedbusters.co.nz; follow-up will be needed.

Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Climbing asparagus root system Photo: S. Crump