

WE NEED YOU!

JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST BRIDAL CREEPER

You can make a difference in fighting bridal creeper, a major weed devastating areas of native bush and roadsides in south-east and south-west Australia.

Katanning Land Conservation District Committee, Dumbleyung Landcare Zone, Wagin-Woodanilling Landcare Zone and West Arthur Landcare invite groups, landowners and individuals to join the war against this invasive pest.

The State Governments' Natural Resource Management program has provided funding over the last five years to contract chemical roadside spraying and non-toxic biological spore-water spraying. These efforts have already made inroads into areas of bridal creeper infestation in these shires.

Although much is being done about roadside infestations, many reserves and private land areas are not adequately managed and require community intervention. It can take up to seven years to control a single bridal creeper plant, and it spreads easily if not continually managed.

This is where you come in.

The fight against bridal creeper continues.



How to make spore-water

1 Collect rusty bridal creeper

Information on where to find bridal creeper infected with rust fungus is available from your local Landcare Centres or DAFWA Biosecurity Officers. Rust fungus should be growing between July and September each year, depending on that season's rainfall. Check that the leaves of the plant are clearly infected and feel the underside of the leaves to see if any spores rub off in your hand.

Place rust bridal creeper plants into plastic garbage bags. A full garbage bag of rusty bridal creeper will make about 100 litres of spore-water.

Be aware of potential allergy to fungus spores. Avoid breathing in the spores by wearing a standard face dust mask. Gloves will protect hands.

You can transport the bags to where you want to spread the spores. If you keep the bags out of the sun, spores should survive for a couple of days.

It is best to collect the spores during damp weather.



2 Collect water

Good quality water – rain water is best – is essential to keep spores alive. Never use chlorinated or salty water.

Rust spores have limited life in water. It takes about an hour for one person to spray 100 litres onto scattered bridal creeper. So unless you are dealing with dense infestations, using two hoses or a fire hose, make only 200-litre or 300-litre amounts at a time at the spray site.

If using a commercial chemical spray unit, take the filter out of the pump line to avoid trapping the spores. Before starting, completely remove any chemical residue in the spray unit by washing and rinsing at least three times.

3 Make spore-water

Wash rust spores from infected bridal creeper. This can be done by dunking or agitating the rust-infested creeper in water-filled containers.

As rust spores wash off the creeper the water turns to a rusty brown colour. You want the rusty water, not the creeper leaves and fragments. Keep the creeper in a basket or leave it in the rubbish bag and put holes in the bag so the plants can breathe – you can use the creeper plants again to make more rusty water.

Tip the rusty water into a bucket and tip this into your spray tank. Use a sieve to remove larger particles to avoid blocking spray nozzles.

You should be able to wash one bag of rusty creeper three or four times into 100 litres of water. Don't worry about the plant juices – the rust fungus needs them to live and they might help spores stick to new host plants.

4 Spray spore-water

Spore-water is harmless to everything except bridal creeper so you can spray creeper in most situations – in native vegetation, on stream banks, in gardens.

Rust spores need to get into the small pores on creeper leaves to grow inside the plant, so spray thoroughly from top to bottom, especially on the underside of the leaves where there are more pores. Spray leaves from all sides and use as fine a mist as possible.

Try to keep the spore water solution agitated while in the spray tank to minimise spores sticking to the sides of the tank.

The best conditions for spraying are on days of light rain, light wind and high humidity. Fungus infection might be difficult where bridal creeper is exposed to wind and sun. It might be best to spray in late afternoon so leaves can stay damp overnight.

5 Drape leftovers

Use left-over washed creeper to drape over fresh areas of bridal creeper. Plant remnants will continue to release spores for a few hours or days and are important in helping infestation.

6 Clean up

Don't leave any unused spore-water for more than a day or it will smell, attract flies and block and corrode equipment. Clean equipment and wash yourself and your clothes thoroughly when you finish spraying.

7 Let us know

Tell your local Landcare officer where you have been spraying, and take some before and after photos. Remember, it can take seven years to control a single bridal creeper plant, so keep at it year after year!

For further information contact your local Landcare Officers, or DAFWA Biosecurity officers.



Department of
Agriculture and Food

