Declared Plant Policy

Ground Asparagus, Ornamental Asparagus and Climbing Asparagus Fern (*Asparagus aethiopicus, A. africanus* and *A. plumosus.*)

In addition to bridal creeper, bridal veil and climbing asparagus, which are the subjects of separate policies, three additional asparagus weeds are significant weeds in some parts of Australia. These include *A. aethiopicus* (ground asparagus), *A. africanus* (ornamental asparagus) and *A. plumosus* (climbing asparagus fern).

The declaration of these *Asparagus* species does not include *A. racemosus, A. virgatus* or the cultivated vegetable *A. officinalis*.

Management Plan for Ground Asparagus, Ornamental Asparagus and Climbing Asparagus Fern

**Outcomes**

- Prevention of national trade in Weeds of National Significance.

**Objectives**

- No supply of asparagus weeds by growers or retailers in South Australia.

**Implementation**

- Sale and movement of ground asparagus, ornamental asparagus and climbing asparagus fern to be prohibited in South Australia.

- Compliance action in the event that ground asparagus, ornamental asparagus or climbing asparagus fern are offered for sale in South Australia.

**Regional Implementation**

Refer to regional management plans for further details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NRM Region</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alinytjara Wilurara</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyre Peninsula</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern and Yorke</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Arid Lands</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Murray-Darling Basin</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>Prevent sale or movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Declaration

To implement this policy, Asparagus aethiopicus, A. africanaus and A. plumosus are declared under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 throughout the whole of the State of South Australia to prevent any further planting, sale and movement. The movement or transport of the plants on a public road by themselves or as contaminants, their entry to South Australia, or sale by themselves or as contaminants are prohibited.

These three species are declared in category 2 under the Act for the purpose of setting maximum penalties and for other purposes. Any permit to allow their movement or sale can only be issued by the Chief Officer pursuant to section 188.

The following sections of the Act apply to the three Asparagus species throughout each of the NRM regions noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections of Act</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>175(1) Prohibiting entry to area</td>
<td>AMLR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads</td>
<td>AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177(1) Prohibiting sale of the plant</td>
<td>EP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177(2) Prohibiting sale of contaminated goods</td>
<td>KI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 Requiring notification of infestations</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182(1) Landowners to destroy the plant on their properties</td>
<td>SAAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182(2) Landowners to control the plant on their properties</td>
<td>SAMDB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182(3) Landowners to comply with regulations or instructions</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cultivar Asparagus aethiopicus Myersii (foxtail fern) is explicitly excluded from the declaration.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 2020, or in the event of a change in one or more regional management plans for these three Asparagus species or a change in their status as Weeds of National Significance.

Weed Risk

Invasiveness

These Asparagus species are all dispersed by seeds produced in berries that are eaten by many species of native and introduced birds. They establish readily among undisturbed native vegetation in suitable climates.

Impacts

All three species are climbing plants that compete with native vegetation in suitable climates. Unlike bridal creeper, they do not have a summer dormant period and so are not significant invaders of native vegetation in South Australia.
Potential distribution

All three species are significant weeds in moist subtropical climates in eastern Australia. In South Australia they are casual garden escapes of high rainfall areas, persisting in abandoned gardens and where they have been dumped with garden waste.

Feasibility of Containment

Control costs

Control by herbicides is labour-intensive and results in some off-target damage occurs but may be used to protect high value sites.

Persistence

These three Asparagus species can maintain themselves indefinitely in suitable climates, regenerating readily from rhizomes unless killed by prolonged drought. Their seeds are relatively short lived and do not form large seed banks in the soil under an infestation.

Current distribution

Asparagus aethiopicus is a common garden plant that comes up spontaneously from seed in urban gardens where water is available over summer.

Asparagus africanus is not recorded as naturalised in South Australia.

Asparagus plumosus is scattered in the Northern and Yorke, Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges, and South Australia Murray-Darling Basin NRM regions.

State Level Risk Assessment

Assessment using the Biosecurity SA Weed Risk Management System gave the following comparative weed risk and feasibility of containment scores for native vegetation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Weed Risk</th>
<th>Feasibility of control</th>
<th>Response at State Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus aethiopicus</td>
<td>low 21</td>
<td>very high 3</td>
<td>monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus africanus</td>
<td>medium 77</td>
<td>very high 0</td>
<td>contain spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus plumosus</td>
<td>low 17</td>
<td>very high 3</td>
<td>monitor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considerations

Asparagus aethiopicus includes variants that are popular ornamentals, particularly in hanging baskets. It was formerly confused with Asparagus densiflorus in gardening literature. The cultivar Asparagus aethiopicus Myersii, known as foxtail asparagus or foxtail fern, is explicitly exempt from declaration. Unlike the trailing parent species, it has compact erect shoots and low seed production.

Asparagus africanus and A. plumosus are traditional garden plants that are not now marketed commercially. The latter has sometimes been confused with A. setaceus in Australian floras and gardening literature.
**Synonymy**

*Asparagus aethiopicus* L., Mant. Pl. 1 (1770).

Nomenclatural synonyms:

- *Asparagopsis aethiopica* (L.) Kunth, Enum. Pl. 5: 95 (1850).

Taxonomic synonyms:


Other common names include emerald fern and Sprenger asparagus.

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*Asparagus africanus* Lam., Encycl. 1: 295 (1783).

Nomenclatural synonym:


Taxonomic synonyms:


Other common names include asparagus fern and climbing asparagus.

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Nomenclatural synonym:


Other common names include lace fern and ferny asparagus.