

*Asparagus densiflorus*  [简体中文](#) [正體中文](#)

**System:** Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Liliopsida	Liliales	Liliaceae

**Common name** Sprenger's asparagus fern (English), asparagus fern (English), regal fern (English), sprengeri fern (English), smilax (English), asperge de Sprenger (French), bushy asparagus (English)

**Synonym** *Asparagus sprengeri* , Regel  
*Asparagopsis densiflorus* , Kunth  
*Protasparagus densiflorus* , (Kunth) Oberm.  
*Asparagus aethiopicus* , L. cv. *sprengeri*

**Similar species** *Asparagus spp.*

**Summary** *Asparagus densiflorus*, commonly known as asparagus fern, is not a true fern. It reproduces by seed. *A. densiflorus* is known to invade a variety of habitats, and its impacts include smothering of forest understory and ground cover and preventing the regeneration of canopy species.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)

## Species Description

*Asparagus densiflorus* is described as a spreading perennial herb with a fine texture and stiff, upright habit. The stems which are stiff and erect and a bit woody are armed with stiff spines, they emerge directly from the ground. The plant grows rapidly up to a height of 60cms. The leaves of the plant are small and scale like, what we consider to be leaves are actually narrow, light green, leaf-like branchlets called cladophylls which can reach lengths of 2.5cms. The needles are clustered at branch nodes. The flowers are small, white or pinkish white, and fragrant; the fruit which are quite showy are bright red in colour about 8mm in diameter, and are typically 3 seeds per fruit (The University of Florida, 2002; Gilman, 1999).

## Notes

Eating *Asparagus densiflorus* berries may cause gastrointestinal problems. Skin irritation with redness, swelling, and blisters following contact with sap.

He *et al.* (2001) observed that *A. densiflorus* is resistant to the fungi *Fusarium oxysporum*, *F. asparagi* and *F. proliferatum*. The authors believe this resistance is centered around the production two defense enzymes that *A. densiflorus* can produce.

## Lifecycle Stages

Seeds may germinate at any time of the year providing moisture is available, but there is a major flush in spring and a smaller one in autumn. Growth rate is slow until the root system is well established, increasing rapidly subsequently. Tuber begin to form on the rhizomes and roots about mid-summer. Although plants do not always flower in their first year, flowering usually commences in October and continues until February or march and in some situations, continues to May or June. Fruit may be present on plants all the year. In established plants, new growth forms on the rhizomes and tubers in spring increasing the size of the effected area.(Parsons and Cuthbertson 1992).

## Habitat Description

*Asparagus densiflorus* can be found on, "Dry to moist forests and openings. In Australia it has invaded coastal, littoral rainforest, rainforest, frontal dunes and sclerophyll forest and coastal heath (PIER, 2005). The Australian Weeds Committee (2004) states that, "A. densiflorus is a persistent weed of urban bushland. It is shade tolerant and grows best in shaded areas where other vegetation has been removed. It is also often found growing near abandoned houses or near habitation where pieces have been dumped." Jamieson (2002) states that, "A. densiflorus grows in most soils and is fairly drought tolerant, but does much better in soil which is rich in organic matter and is watered regularly."

The University of Florida (2002) has gathered the following information on *A. densiflorus*: "Cold hardy to -1°C (30°F) (Broschat and Meerow 1991). Thrives in any well-drained soil (Stresau 1986). Grows in low to high light conditions, has low nutrient requirements, and tolerates drought (Broschat and Meerow 1991). *A. densiflorus* is also noted as having "good" salt tolerance (Hunt 1977)."

## Reproduction

Plants in the genus *Asparagus* such as *A. setaceus* and *A. densiflorus* are called ferns, but are not true ferns since they produce seeds and not spores." Csurhes and Edwards (1998) state that, "The plant produces large numbers of fleshy, red berries which usually each contain a single seed. The fruit is probably dispersed by birds."

## Nutrition

*Asparagus densiflorus* plants have extensive root systems with fairly large tubers, which are used in nature to provide food during long periods of drought in summer (Jamieson, 2002).

## General Impacts

*Asparagus densiflorus* has the potential to be similar to climbing asparagus in its ability to smother forest understory to a height of 2.5 - 5 m; this species can also smother ground cover and prevent regeneration of canopy species (Bay of Plenty Regional Council, undated).

## Management Info

Preventative measures: A [Risk assessment of \*Asparagus densiflorus\*](#) for the Pacific region was prepared by Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER) using the Australian risk assessment system (Pheloung, 1995). The result is a score of 15 and a recommendation of: reject the plant for import (Australia) or species likely to be of high risk (Pacific).

A [Risk assessment of \*Asparagus densiflorus\*](#) for Australia was prepared by Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER) using the Australian risk assessment system (Pheloung, 1995). The result is a score of 3 and a recommendation of: the plant requires further evaluation.

The Asparagus Weeds Best Practice Management Manual offer some best practice management advice on the management and control of Asparagus weeds. The first section of this manual contains practical information on how to develop a weed management plan and is aimed at land managers who may be embarking on a new project or tackling a weed incursion for the first time. The sections that follow consist of identification and management information for individual Asparagus weed species including *Asparagus asparagoides*, *A. declinatus*, *A. scandens*, *A. aethiopicus* (= *A. densiflorus*) and *A. africanus*.

## Pathway

The widespread use of this plant in ornamental settings coupled with production of large numbers of fruit that are undoubtedly attractive to birds which will continue to contribute to the plants spread (Bishop Museum, 1999).

**Principal source:** University of Florida, 2002. Liliaceae/Lily Family *Asparagus densiflorus* (Kunth) Jessop. Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council.

[Regional Weeds Advisory Committee, 2004.](#) Draft Regional Weed Management Plan 1.1 Plan Title: Coastal weeds

**Compiler:** National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) & IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) with support from the Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (TFBIS) Programme (Copyright statement)

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**Review:** Dennis Gannaway, National Bridal Creeper Management Coordinator. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWBL) Government of South Australia, Australia

**Publication date:** 2010-10-04

## ALIEN RANGE

[1] ANGUILLA	[5] AUSTRALIA
[1] BAHAMAS	[1] BERMUDA
[1] CHRISTMAS ISLAND	[2] COOK ISLANDS
[3] FRENCH POLYNESIA	[1] GUADELOUPE
[1] GUAM	[2] INDIA
[3] MARSHALL ISLANDS	[1] MARTINIQUE
[1] NEW CALEDONIA	[3] NEW ZEALAND
[2] NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS	[3] PALAU
[1] REUNION	[1] SAINT BARTHELEMY
[1] SAINT MARTIN (FRENCH PART)	[2] SAMOA
[4] TONGA	[17] UNITED STATES

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**Summary:** Available from: <http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/docs/Asp19Breaden.pdf> [Accessed 9 December 2009]

CRC for Australian Weed Management 2004. *Introductory weed management manual. Australian Government. Department of Environment and Heritage.*

**Summary:** This manual has been prepared as a training aid for the use of private landholders, conservation groups, catchment management groups, local, state and territory governments and industry. It is an introductory guide for those with little experience with weed management, particularly environmental weeds. It will be of use to those who wish to develop their weed management knowledge and skills, and as an extension resource for those who need to develop the weed management capacity of others. The manual is presented in four modules:

- Module 1: Developing and implementing a weed management plan
- Module 2: Weed control methods for community groups
- Module 3: Collecting and preparing plant specimens for identification
- Module 4: Presentation of information sessions to small groups

Available from: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/109603/20091103-1603/www.lgsa.org.au/resources/documents/manual.pdf> [Accessed 9 December 2009]

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**Summary:** Available from: <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/weeds-potential/appendix-c-a.html> [Accessed 21 February, 2005]

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He, C., T. Hsiang, and D. J. Wolyn. 2001. Activation of defense responses to Fusarium infection in *Asparagus densiflorus*. *European Journal of Plant Pathology*. 2001; 107(5): 473-483.

[IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group \(ISSG\), 2010. A Compilation of Information Sources for Conservation Managers.](#)

**Summary:** This compilation of information sources can be sorted on keywords for example: Baits & Lures, Non Target Species, Eradication, Monitoring, Risk Assessment, Weeds, Herbicides etc. This compilation is at present in Excel format, this will be web-enabled as a searchable database shortly. This version of the database has been developed by the IUCN SSC ISSG as part of an Overseas Territories Environmental Programme funded project XOT603 in partnership with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment. The compilation is a work under progress, the ISSG will manage, maintain and enhance the database with current and newly published information, reports, journal articles etc.

[Regional Weeds Advisory Committee, 2004. Draft Regional Weed Management Plan: Coastal Weeds. NSW North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee.](#)

[Varnham, K. 2006. Non-native species in UK Overseas Territories: a review. JNCC Report 372. Peterborough: United Kingdom.](#)

**Summary:** This database compiles information on alien species from British Overseas Territories.

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**Summary:** Available from: <http://collections.antilles.inra.fr/> [Accessed 31 March 2008]

[Conover, C. A. 2003. Ferns. University of Florida IFAS Extension.](#)

**Summary:** Available from: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG032> [Accessed 21 February, 2005]

[Conservatoire Botanique National De Mascarin \(BOULLET V. coord.\) 2007. - Asparagus densiflorus Index de la flore vasculaire de la Réunion \(Trachophytes\) : statuts, menaces et protections. - Version 2007.1](#)

**Summary:** Base de données sur la flore de La Réunion. De nombreuses informations très utiles.

Available from: <http://flore.cbnm.org/index2.php?page=taxon&num=9f396fe44e7c05c16873b05ec425cbad> [Accessed 28 March 2008]

[Florence J., Chevillotte H., Ollier C. & Meyer J.-Y. 2007. Asparagus densiflorus Base de données botaniques Nadeaud de l'Herbier de la Polynésie française \(PAP\).](#)

**Summary:** Base de données sur la flore de Polynésie Française.

Available from: [http://www.herbier-tahiti.pf/Selection\\_Taxonomie.php?id\\_tax=4747](http://www.herbier-tahiti.pf/Selection_Taxonomie.php?id_tax=4747) [Accessed 26 March 2008]

Fournet, J. 2002. Flore illustrée des phanogames de guadeloupe et de Martinique. CIRAD-Gondwana editions.

[ITIS \(Integrated Taxonomic Information System\). 2005. Online Database Asparagus densiflorus.](#)

**Summary:** An online database that provides taxonomic information, common names, synonyms and geographical jurisdiction of a species. In addition links are provided to retrieve biological records and collection information from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Data Portal and bioscience articles from BioOne journals.

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