

Climbing asparagus

Asparagus scandens, Asparagaceae



- shade loving climber
- also forms thick ground cover
- smothers native plants
- feathery 'leaves' actually flattened stems called cladodes
- curved cladodes arranged in threes, with one being slightly shorter in length
- small white flowers
- small orange-red fruit contains single round, black seed
- roots have tubers which can grow new plants
- prefers moist, shady sites but can tolerate dry periods
- mostly spreads from tubers in NZ, but birds also eat and disperse seed
- originally from South African montane forests



Control: Climbing asparagus is difficult to eradicate as it thrives under a forest canopy. Cut back the foliage and dig out all the tubers and roots. The tubers should be well composted, buried deeply or placed in a plastic bag in the sun to prevent re-establishment. Alternatively, herbicide can be applied - in spring or early summer, for best effect.

Photos: bottom right, N. Henderson, WeedFree Trust; remainder, A. Stanton