

# Cats Claw Creeper

*Dolichandra unguis-cati*

Category 3 - Must not distribute by sale or gift. Must not release it into the environment.

## The Problem

Cats Claw Creeper is causing severe concern in SE QLD and is regarded as the 4th most invasive alien species in the region. It was originally brought to Australia as a garden plant for its pretty yellow flowers but it has escaped and is now a significant threat to riparian zones, rainforest and bushland as well as being a rampant weed of urban areas. Cats Claw starts life on the ground creating a network of tangling vines along the forest floor, rooting down with tubers every 30cm or so. The mass it creates has the ability to smother and kill all other plants and prevent the regeneration of ALL native species. Once the vines find a tree they use claw like hooks to climb into the highest canopy and grow rapidly with the vines becoming woody over time. Through a combination of weight and shading they will eventually kill their host tree. Cats Claw spreads via underground tubers which constantly grow and multiply, and also long bean shaped seed pods which produce hundreds of winged seeds which can drift for miles.

## How to remove it

**Dig up tubers** - laborious but effective in young plants, [click here for demo video](#)

**Cut and paste** - For more established vines, cut at the base and paste with 50/50 (50% water, 50% Glyphosate) within 10 seconds, so the vine sucks the chemical into its roots and dies.

**Biocontrol** - There are several beetles that eat cats claw, the most successful of these being the Jewel Beetle which breeds faster and does more damage. Watergum has its own breeding facility as part of our [invasive species program](#).

**WARNING** - Herbicides contain hazardous chemicals. Incorrect use can cause injury and damage to the environment. Use with care and contact an expert for advice if unsure.

## Prevent the spread!

- Remove before plants flower and seed.
- Carefully dig up tuber systems to prevent new infestations taking hold
- For more information, check out the [Brisbane Weed Profile](#)
- To develop skills in weeding, join your [Local Landcare Group](#)
- For free, professional help with your property, join [Land For Wildlife](#)



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