

Bushy asparagus

Asparagus aethiopicus

What does it look like?

Two growth forms are known: (1) cultivar 'Sprengerii' is a trailing scrambler with stems to 2 m that are branched towards tips, and with sparse cladodes (flattened leaf-like stems, 10-25 mm) that are flat in cross section, and (2) cultivar 'Meyeri' has erect stems to 700 mm forming a dense cylinder, and is covered in cladodes (5-10 mm) that are triangular in cross section. Both cultivars have small tubers, thin wiry stems, tiny pinkish flowers and bright red berries.

Birds spread the seeds, and tubers resprout and are spread by soil and water movement. Common as both a garden and house plant, and occasionally found in hedges.



Why is it a problem?

Dense, patch-forming habit, tough, long-lived tubers that resprout, moderate to slow growth rate, and seeds that are widely distributed. Tolerates moderate to high rainfall. Can smother shrubs and other low vegetation. Likely to invade bush edges, low-growing habitats and dune vegetation, especially near gardens.



Control Methods

Physical control

Dig out tubers. Dispose of at a refuse transfer station or burn. Leave rest of cut material on site to rot down.

Herbicide control

Spray (spring-early summer only): glyphosate (20ml/L). Do not add penetrant when spraying against tree trunks. Spray lightly, avoiding runoff.

Tubers often resprout after spraying, stems break at ground level so plants cannot be pulled. Tuber fragments usually survive digging. Always follow up on treated areas at least 6-monthly. Replant treated areas where possible after 2-3 treatments to establish dense ground cover and minimise reinvasion.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

Related Links

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/bushy-asparagus/>

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Rules

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.