

Asparagus Fern - Statutory Weed Management Plan

Asparagus scandens Thunb.

Interpretation:

In this Weed Management Plan (approved 25 November 2006)
(amendments approved 21 June 2011):

- "Act" means the *Weed Management Act 1999*.
- "Approved quarantine place" means a place approved by the Secretary under section 70 of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* for the purpose of examining any prescribed matter imported into or to be exported out of the State.
- "Court fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Court fines may be imposed if a person is convicted of any offence against the Act.
- "DPIPWE" means the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
- "Infringement fine" means a prescribed penalty for breaches against the Act. Infringement fines are imposed by way of an infringement notice that may be issued by a Weed Inspector.
- "Inspector" means a Weed Inspector appointed under section 34 of the Act.
- "Penalty unit" means the basic unit of the fine for which persons who fail to comply with any prohibition or requirement under the Act may be liable. See [values of penalty units](#) under the *Penalty Units and Other Penalties Act 1987* for more details.
- "Quarantine Tasmania" means that branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment that, in cooperation with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, maintains both overseas and interstate quarantine barriers for this State.
- "[Regional Weed Management Officer](#)" means a person employed in the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment under that specific title.
- "Regulations" means the *Weed Management Regulations 2007*.
- "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
- "WONS" means Weeds of National Significance. The WONS program is a federally funded initiative for the development and implementation of State and national strategies for the management of twenty of Australia's worst weeds.
- "Zone A" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which eradication of a declared weed is the principal management objective. These municipalities are either free of the declared weed, host only small, isolated infestations, or host larger infestations which are deemed eradicable because a strategic management plan exists and the resources required to

implement it have been or are likely to be secured. See [Management of asparagus fern by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.

- "Zone B" includes those Tasmanian municipalities for which containment of the declared weed is the principal management objective. Such municipalities host large, widespread infestations of the declared weed that are not deemed eradicable because the feasibility of effective management is low at this time. These municipalities lack a strategic management plan for the weed and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication have not been secured. See [Management of asparagus fern by municipality](#) (Section 12) for details.
- "Asparagus fern" means *Asparagus scandens* Thunb. and includes the whole plant or plant parts. It does not include products such as tablets, lotions, tinctures or other preparations that contain extracts of this plant or other dead, non-reproductive *Asparagus scandens* materials. People who are uncertain about whether products (e.g. dried materials) contain plant parts capable of producing a living plant should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

1. Purpose of this management plan:

The purpose of this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern is to:

- Provide direction upon the implementation of the *Act* with respect to asparagus fern.
- Encourage and facilitate an increase in the effectiveness with which asparagus fern is managed throughout Tasmania, with a view to eradicating all existing populations and preventing future infestations.
- Provide legislative support to regional and local efforts to manage asparagus fern in a strategic and integrated manner.

2. Area covered by this management plan:

The State of Tasmania is covered by this management plan.

3. Description and distribution of the weed:

Asparagus fern is a climbing plant from South Africa that invades native vegetation including dry sclerophyll forest and coastal heath.

It is a significant environmental weed in Victoria and Western Australia and an emerging weed New South Wales and South Australia.

Asparagus fern is found mostly in northern Tasmania, generally occurring in coastal or near coastal environments. The most severe Tasmanian infestations occur on King Island and in the Bridport area. Significant but smaller populations of this weed also occur in coastal areas between Devonport and Burnie. Refer to [Management of](#)

[asparagus fern by municipality](#) (Section 12) for information on the distribution of asparagus fern in Tasmania by municipality.

See the DPIPWE [Asparagus Fern Information Page](#) for more information on this weed.

4. Importation of declared weed:

(1) A person must not import or allow to be imported into Tasmania any asparagus fern.

It is an offence against section 57(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted in court of that offence may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons travelling to Tasmania, in particular from areas infested with asparagus fern, such as Victoria and South Australia, should conduct thorough searches for the presence of the plant and apply appropriate hygiene measures, such as clothing, vehicle, machinery and baggage inspection and cleaning. Mud and soil, in particular, are to be removed prior to entry to Tasmania. Questions or concerns about weed hygiene issues should be directed to Quarantine Tasmania personnel before or directly upon disembarkation in Tasmania.
- Persons importing fresh or dried ornamental plants to Tasmania should ensure their stock does not include asparagus fern.
- Persons importing items to Tasmania that may contain asparagus fern should have these checked for the presence of the plant. This can be arranged through Quarantine Tasmania.

Note: The importation of this species into Tasmania is also restricted under the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997*. Quarantine Tasmania should be contacted for information on the relevance and application of the *Plant Quarantine Act 1997* to activities concerning plant species.

5. Procedures for notification of the occurrence of the weed:

Inspectors shall notify a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) of any asparagus fern occurrences in municipalities or parts of municipalities

where the weed is not yet recorded. Refer to Table 1 in [Management of asparagus fern by municipality](#) (Section 12) for distribution of asparagus fern in Tasmania by municipality.

6. Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed:

(1) A person must not:

(a) sell asparagus fern or any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern; or

(b) purchase or offer to purchase asparagus fern or any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern; or

(c) grow, propagate or scatter asparagus fern; or

(d) store asparagus fern or any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern; or

(e) hire or offer for hire any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern; or

(f) use asparagus fern or any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern; or

(g) deal with asparagus fern or any material or thing containing or carrying asparagus fern in any manner that is likely to result in the spread of the declared weed.

It is an offence against section 56(1) of the Act to fail to comply with this prohibition. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this prohibition under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- Persons giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, growing, propagating or scattering, storing, using, or otherwise dealing with ornamental plants should ensure their stock does not include asparagus fern. This includes roadside stalls, market stalls, fundraising events, garden club swaps, nursery sales, supermarket plant sales and ANY OTHER activities that involve the distribution of ornamental plants.

- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural or roading machinery likely to be contaminated with mud or soil containing asparagus fern should ensure appropriate inspection and hygiene measures are undertaken. These include introducing thorough visual checks and cleaning of machinery as routine tasks when preparing these items for sale or distribution.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with soil, gravel, lime or other such materials from areas infested with asparagus fern should ensure appropriate hygiene and inspection measures are undertaken. These include practicing integrated control of the weed in quarries, stockpile areas, wholesale or retail outlets and other places from which these materials are sold or distributed.
- Persons involved in the giving away, bartering or selling, purchasing, storing, hiring, using, or otherwise dealing with agricultural or roading machinery, stock, soil, gravel or other such materials likely to be contaminated with asparagus fern should take direction from any relevant local, regional or State hygiene programs being implemented in the municipality.
- Persons purchasing or hiring any items (e.g. machinery, soil, gravel or other such materials) likely to be contaminated with asparagus fern should liaise with suppliers on the subject of asparagus fern contamination and keep accurate records of their purchase transactions. Buyers discovering asparagus fern contamination post-purchase should implement practices that reduce the potential for asparagus fern establishment and spread. These include, creating dedicated areas for the wash down of purchased machinery and vehicles and carefully monitoring any suspect soil, gravel or other such materials for the emergence of this weed.

(2) It is a defence in proceedings for an offence under section 56(1) of the Act if the defendant establishes that he or she took all reasonable actions to prevent the commission of the offence.

7. Measures to reduce the number of asparagus fern plants, eradicate asparagus fern from an area or restrict asparagus fern to a particular area:

An Inspector may, by serving a notice on the owner of any place, require that owner to implement any of the measures described in this part of the Weed Management Plan or any other measures consistent with it.

It is an offence against section 13(3) of the Act to fail to comply with a requirement notice issued by an Inspector. A person who fails to comply with that notice may be issued with an infringement fine of 8 penalty

units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 100 penalty units and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding 5 penalty units for each day during which the offence continues.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter by persons or organisations upon whose properties asparagus fern occurs could include but are not limited to the following:

- Planning and implementation of a property management plan, the aim of which is eradication of asparagus fern. Such a plan should be based on integrated weed management principles and include an inventory of asparagus fern infestations in the area to which the plan relates, well-defined objectives, practicable control actions, follow-up actions, a realistic timeline and a budget, as a minimum. Regional Weed Management Officers or Inspectors may be contacted for advice on developing a property management plan for this plant.
- Seek information about supporting any council endorsed plans relating to asparagus fern management in their municipality.
- Seek cooperation with neighbouring property owners when asparagus fern control measures are being planned or implemented.

Other general measures:

- Persons or organisations responsible for managing land which is currently free of asparagus fern should undertake prevention measures, especially when that land is suited to asparagus fern establishment. Such prevention measures include:
 - Developing an ability to identify the plant;
 - Noting its occurrence and progress on nearby properties;
 - Undertaking control of small outbreaks without delay;
 - Arranging on-site quarantine for, or not bringing or allowing onto the property vehicles, machinery, soil, gravel, lime or other such material that may be contaminated with asparagus fern.

A [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) may be contacted for advice on keeping areas free of asparagus fern.

- Persons performing contract work of an agricultural, utility maintenance, roading or earthmoving nature, on-site consultations or assessments, deliveries or other visits in areas or properties infested with asparagus fern should undertake appropriate hygiene measures. These include thorough visual checks upon clothing, footwear, vehicles and machinery and, cleaning of the same of mud and soil in particular, prior to leaving the infested property. Developing a check-list will help ensure such routines are rigorous and consistent. Materials or items likely to be contaminated with asparagus fern should not be moved from asparagus fern infested areas or to asparagus

fern free areas until any contamination risks have been minimised.

- Persons wishing to conduct on-site disposal of asparagus fern or any thing contaminated with asparagus fern should contact an Inspector or a Regional Weed Management Officer first, in order to receive direction upon how best to do this.
- Persons considering transporting asparagus fern or any thing contaminated with asparagus fern for the purpose of disposal, should first seek advice from an Inspector or a Regional Weed Management Officer as to whether removal of the material from the site is the preferred option. If on-site disposal is not appropriate and transport to a suitable disposal facility is recommended, this should be undertaken in a manner that does not permit the release of seeds or other material. Note that municipal waste disposal facilities vary in their acceptance and handling of declared weeds. Municipal waste disposal managers should be contacted for details.

8. Storage in a specified area of any thing contaminated with the declared weed:

Any thing found to be contaminated with asparagus fern may be removed to storage at an appropriate approved quarantine place. A Regional Weed Management Officer will determine whether removal to storage at any of these facilities or treatment/destruction of material in situ is most appropriate.

Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence against section 51(1) of the Act. A person found committing that offence may incur an infringement fine of 4 penalty units. A person convicted of that offence in court may be liable to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

The Secretary may exempt a person from this requirement under section 60 of the Act.

Actions to assist compliance in this matter could include but are not limited to the following:

- A person who discovers or suspects he/she possesses any thing, (e.g. machinery, soil, gravel) contaminated with asparagus fern should contact an Inspector or a Regional Weed Management Officer. The contaminated thing should not be moved, disturbed, treated or disposed of prior to making this contact. If asparagus fern is confirmed, the person will be directed and advised in the proper management, including storage or disposal options, of the contaminated thing.

9. Any other measures the Minister considers appropriate to control the weed:

There are no other measures appropriate for the management of asparagus fern in Tasmania at this time.

10. Exemptions:

A person may apply for an exemption from any of provisions of the *Act* that relate to asparagus fern. He/she should contact a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#) to discuss the reasons for seeking the exemption and obtain an exemption application form.

Persons granted an exemption should ensure they understand fully, any conditions specified in the exemption. Queries can be directed to a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

11. Review of this Weed Management Plan:

A review of this Weed Management Plan may be undertaken at least once every five years if it is necessary and desirable to do so. The review will incorporate consultation with stakeholders deemed appropriate by the Secretary, DPIPW.

12. Management of asparagus fern by municipality:

Asparagus fern presents a complex weed management challenge for Tasmanians. This complexity results in part from:

- the varied distribution of the plant across the State;
- its impacts in natural environments;
- its diverse and effective means of spread;
- its use as an ornamental plant;
- its ability to establish even among healthy native vegetation where soil and litter are suitable;
- its tolerance of salt, shade, dry and wet conditions, and its ability to grow on a wide range of soils including sand;
- different management capabilities and priorities at the State agency, municipal, local and individual property levels.

Accordingly, it is unlikely that attempts at uniform application and enforcement of measures in this Statutory Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern would result in appropriate, fair or workable management outcomes. However, this Weed Management Plan can be implemented effectively if the differences listed above are taken into account, at least at the local government level. One means of doing this is to identify clear, distinct management objectives suitable at a municipal scale and then specify the manner in which

the measures outlined in this Weed Management Plan should be undertaken in order to achieve those objectives.

Each Tasmanian municipality is classified into one of two management zones (Zones A or B) for the purposes of implementing this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern.

Zone A Municipalities - eradication: Eradication is the most appropriate management objective for Zone A municipalities which have little or no asparagus fern, or when a credible plan for eradicating existing infestations is being developed and implemented. The ultimate management outcome for Zone A municipalities is achieving and maintaining the total absence of asparagus fern from within municipal boundaries.

Zone B municipalities - containment: Containment is the most appropriate management objective for Zone B municipalities which have problematic infestations but no plan and/or resources to undertake control actions at a level required for eradication. The management outcome for Zone B municipalities is ongoing prevention of the spread of asparagus fern from existing infestations to areas free or in the process of becoming free of asparagus fern.

The decision regarding which category is most appropriate for a particular municipality at a particular time is made jointly by DPIWE and each municipality. Municipalities may change categories over time. For example, a Zone B municipality may decide to develop and implement a strategic plan for asparagus fern, with eradication as the objective. Provided the plan is credible, this municipality would qualify for inclusion in Zone A. Conversely, a Zone A municipality with widespread infestations may decide to stop supporting a strategic plan for asparagus fern eradication, in which case it would be re-classified as Zone B.

Zone A Municipalities

Table 1 lists the distribution and management measures for asparagus fern in Tasmanian municipalities currently classified as Zone A for asparagus fern.

Table 1. Distribution and management measures for asparagus fern in municipalities classified as Zone A at 01/2011.

Distribution based on Tasmanian Herbarium and DPIPW records.

Municipality	Asparagus fern distribution	Management measures *
Break O'Day	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Brighton	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Burnie	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Central Coast	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Central Highlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Circular Head	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Clarence	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Derwent Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Devonport	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Dorset	Localised infestations	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences

Flinders	Localised infestations	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
George Town	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Glenorchy	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Hobart	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
Huon Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Kentish	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Kingborough	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Latrobe	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Launceston	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Meander Valley	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Northern Midlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Sorell	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Southern Midlands	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
Tasman	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future

		occurrences
Waratah/Wynyard	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences
West Coast	None recorded	Prevention and early detection
West Tamar	Isolated occurrences	Implement integrated control program for eradication and prevent future occurrences

*When a DPIPWE approved weed management strategy that has local council endorsement exists, management of this declared weed in the municipality concerned should occur with direct reference to that strategy.

The following distribution categories are used in Table 1:

“None recorded”. This means the plant is not known to be naturalised in the municipality, either from the records of the Tasmanian Herbarium or from DPIPWE databases. In cases where the plant was known to be naturalised at a previous time but is not known there currently, the description “Previously recorded, none known now” is used.

“Isolated occurrences”. This means the species is uncommon in the municipality, with populations limited to one or a few. The number of plants is generally small and/or populations cover small areas.

“Localised infestations”. This means the species is present in the municipality in moderate proportions, with populations numbering several. The number of plants is also moderate and/or populations cover moderate-sized areas.

“Widespread infestations”. This means the species is very common in the municipality, with many populations present. The number of plants present is generally large and/or populations cover large areas.

Note that the distribution descriptions presented in Table 1 apply to naturalised populations of the plant only. They do not include amenity, garden, horticultural or other deliberate plantings unless specified. The descriptions are relative and provide a general indication only of the spatial status of the plant in the municipality. Detailed location

information may be obtained by contacting [a Regional Weed Management Officer](#). In addition, if you have reason to believe any of the distribution information presented in Table 1 is incorrect, please advise a [Regional Weed Management Officer](#).

Application of this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern in Zone A municipalities.

In order to achieve eradication of asparagus fern in each of the municipalities in Table 1, the measures specified under the following clauses of this Weed Management Plan, whenever they apply, should be undertaken and enforced to a high degree, as a minimum effort. The clauses are:

- 4 (Importation of declared weed);
- 5 (Notification of declared weed);
- 6 (Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed);
- 7 (Measures to reduce, eradicate or restrict declared weed) and
- 8 (Storage of declared weed)

Further measures, provided they are consistent with this Weed Management Plan, may also be promoted and enforced where appropriate.

Zone B Municipalities

Table 2 lists the distribution and management measures for asparagus fern in Tasmanian municipalities currently classified as Zone B for asparagus fern. Distribution categories as for Table 1.

Table 2. Distribution and management measures for asparagus fern in municipalities classified as Zone B at 01/2011.

Distribution based on Tasmanian Herbarium and DPIWE records.

Municipality	Asparagus fern distribution	Management measures *
King Island	Widespread infestations	Containment within municipal boundaries, protection of specified areas within municipal boundaries, prevention of spread to Zone A municipalities.

Application of this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern in Zone B municipalities.

For the purposes of applying this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern in Zone B municipalities, two requirements must be satisfied. These are:

- The spread of asparagus fern from the municipality must be prevented
- The spread of asparagus fern to the Zone B landholdings listed in Table 3 must be prevented:

Table 3. Zone B landholdings requiring protection from asparagus fern.

a) Any Zone B property sharing a border with a Zone A municipality
b) Any asparagus fern free property within Zone B.
c) Any group of properties within Zone B for which the owners have developed and are implementing a local integrated Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern.
d) Any property within Zone B where asparagus fern is impacting negatively upon any community or flora or fauna species listed under the Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> and/or the Tasmanian <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> .

The measures described in clauses 4 (Importation of declared weed) and 6 (Sale, purchase, propagation, use, &c., of declared weed) of this Weed Management Plan are to be undertaken and enforced throughout Zone B municipalities to a high degree. Failure to do so increases the threat of asparagus fern to Zone B landholdings listed in Table 3 and to Zone A municipalities. It also increases the likelihood of asparagus fern problems in Zone B municipalities becoming worse.

The measures specified under clauses 5 (Notification of declared weed), 7 (Measures to reduce, eradicate or restrict declared weed) and 8 (Storage of declared weed) of this Weed Management Plan are to be undertaken and enforced to prevent the spread of the plant to the four specific types of landholding listed in Table 3. Equally, enforcement of these measures will also apply to activities in Zone B municipalities that increase the risk of asparagus fern spread to Zone A municipalities. The examples that follow indicate how these measures apply.

Examples of implementation of this Weed Management Plan for asparagus fern in Zone B municipalities.

Procedures for notification of the occurrence of the weed (clause 5).

Example: New asparagus fern occurrences in Zone B municipalities are to be reported when they increase the likelihood of spread of the plant to any of the areas listed in Table 3. For example, a group of Zone B landholders attempting to implement an asparagus fern management plan for their local area may report new occurrences of asparagus fern on municipal roads passing through their area or nearby coastal areas in order that these can be targeted for control. Established, well-known asparagus fern infestations are not to be reported.

Measures to reduce the number of asparagus fern plants, eradicate asparagus fern from an area or restrict asparagus fern to a particular area (clause 7).

Example: Owners of Zone B properties sharing a boundary with landholdings listed in Table 3 are required to undertake property boundary control and control along waterways, drainage lines, roadways and other transport corridors, as described in clause 7. Zone B properties bordering Zone A municipalities are also required to undertake boundary control of asparagus fern along the shared boundary or along waterways, roads and other transport corridors which extend into any Zone A municipality.

Owners of Zone B properties with asparagus fern infestations are not required to undertake boundary control if their neighbours also have asparagus fern infestations but do not fall into the landholding categories described in Table 3.

Example: Agricultural contractors, utility maintenance crews, roading and earthmoving contractors, delivery people and any other persons visiting Zone B properties infested with asparagus fern are required to undertake the basic hygiene measures described in clause 7. Failure to do so increases the likelihood of asparagus fern spread to Zone A municipalities and to Zone B landholdings listed in Table 3. It also increases the chance of existing asparagus fern problems becoming worse.

Example: Transport and disposal of asparagus fern or any thing contaminated with asparagus fern should occur in Zone B municipalities in accordance with suggested measures described in clause 7. Failure to do so increases the likelihood of asparagus fern spread to Zone A municipalities and to Zone B landholdings listed in Table 3. It also increases the chance of existing asparagus fern problems becoming worse.

Storage in a specified area of any thing contaminated with the declared weed (clause 8).

Example: Any thing contaminated with asparagus fern may not be required to be stored in an approved quarantine place if the contaminated thing occurs and will remain in a Zone B municipality. If the problem cannot be dealt with on site, storage in an approved quarantine place may be required when the contaminated thing is destined for or threatens any of the areas listed in Table 3 or any Zone A municipality.