

Clematis flammula

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Family

Ranunculaceae (buttercup)

Also known as

Virgin's bower

Where is it originally from?

Southern Europe and northern Africa

What does it look like?

Deciduous, climbing, vine (<6+ m tall) with long, woody, round and weakly ribbed stems. Leaves are in opposite pairs on the stem, each comprising two rows of thick, sparsely hairy, unlobed small leaflets that fall in Autumn. White flowers (2-3 cm diameter) in large bunches (Jan-Mar) are followed by dense, fluffy clusters of hairy seeds (5-6 mm long) with distinctive white-plumes (3-4 cm long) in May.

Are there any similar species?

Native Clematis species, especially *C. paniculata*. Also old man's beard (*C. vitalba*) and *C. tangutica*. All non-native species found in the wild are deciduous and flower Dec-May, except the semi-weedy, pink-flowered *C. montana* which flowers Oct-Dec.

Why is it weedy?

Rapidly grows into the canopy where it forms dense, heavy masses. Tolerates damp, drought, wind, salt, many soil types, moderate shade, and damage. Stems take root where they touch the ground, and it produces seed that is easily spread.

How does it spread?

Seed is spread by wind or water. Stem fragments are spread by garden waste dumping.

What damage does it do?

Smothers and kills all plants to medium canopy height and prevents native species establishing. Moves readily into shrubland and forest margins as stems take root where they touch the ground.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Shrublands, possibly disturbed and open forest and forest margins, cliffs, and inshore islands.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Stump swab (all year round): Slash thick stems at 1 m and ground level (to prevent stump resprouting and aerial roots attaching from hanging stems). Swab stump with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or triclopyr 600 EC (100ml/L) or a product containing 200g 2,4-D+100g dicamba/L (200ml/L). Leave stems in air to die. Dispose of unattached segments.
2. Spray (spring-autumn): clopyralid (125ml/10L) or triclopyr 600 EC (40ml/10L).

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stumps resprout very quickly, and cut stems root at nodes. Do not leave cut stems to mulch. Dispose of by burning or deep burial. Replant bared areas promptly to minimise seedling regrowth. Check for seedlings at least 6 monthly.



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Photo: Trevor James



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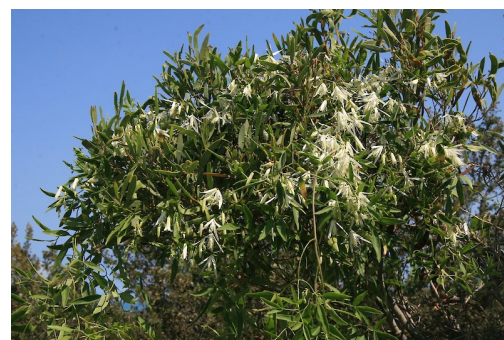


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