Balloon vine

Cardiospermum grandiflorum

Balloon vine is a densely-growing, climbing herb. The main mode of climbing is via the extensive tendrils, which twirl around supporting structures and other plants. Infestations of this weed smother other plants and prevent them from receiving the sunlight they need to photosynthesise. It is commonly found in South East Queensland along waterways, roadsides and in disturbed sites. Forest edges are likely sites for invasion, and the vines will often grow right into the canopy of the trees.

Legal requirements

Balloon vine is a category 3 restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. It must not be given away, sold, or released into the environment. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants under their control. This is called a general biosecurity obligation (GBO).

At a local level, each local government must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in its area. This plan may include actions to be taken on balloon vine. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Description

Balloon vine is named for its fruits, which occur as inflated capsules with pointed tips. When mature, these balloon-shaped capsules split and release the three black, heart-shaped seeds encased within. This vine can grow up to 8 m high in the canopy. The leaves are made up of nine leaflets, which have toothed margins and are dark green in colour. Balloon vine flowers throughout most of the year. Flowers are small and white, growing in clusters with tendrils at the base and in leaf axils.

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Life cycle

Balloon vine flowers in Spring and Summer. The seeds ripen over summer and float to the ground and germinate through most of the year.

Methods of spread

Ballon vine is spread by water and wind.

Habitat and distribution

Native to tropical America (Brazil and eastern Argentina), balloon vine's range spreads from Mexico to the Caribbean. Mostly found in riparian areas, forest margins and gardens in south east Queensland.

Control

Managing balloon vine

The GBO requires a person to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks posed by balloon vine. This fact sheet provides information and some options for controlling balloon vine.

Physical control

Manual removal is recommended for small infestations; pulling the plants out by the roots. Thicker growth may require using a brush hook or similar tool to bring down the top part of the plant. Regrowth is common and a combination of manual and herbicide control may be required.

Herbicide control

There are no herbicide products specifically registered for the control of balloon vine in Queensland. However, a permit allows people generally to use some herbicide products to control balloon vine as an environmental weed in various situations.

See Table 1 for the treatment options in situations allowed by the permit.

Prior to using the herbicides listed under this permit (PER11463) you must read or have read to you and understand the conditions of the permit. To obtain a copy of this permit visit apvma.gov.au.

More information

More information is available from your local government office or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of balloon vine or heart seed vine

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Method
Non-agricultural areas, domestic and public service areas, commercial and industrial areas, bushland/native forests, roadsides, rights-of-way, vacant lots, wastelands, wetlands, dunal and coastal areas	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Weedmaster Duo)	1 part to 2 parts water 10 mL in 20 mL water	Cut stump and paint Apply in spring and summer Apply second application if necessary
	Fluroxypyr 200 g/L (e.g. FMC Fluroxypyr 200 herbicide)	500 mL per 100 L water	Spot spray
	2,4-D Amine 500 g/L (e.g. 2,4-D Amine 500)	4 mL per 1 L water	
	2,4-D Amine 625 g/L (e.g. Ken-Amine 625)	3 mL per 1 L water	

Persons who wish to prepare for use and/or use products for the purposes specified in APVMA permit PER11463 must read, or have read to them, the details and conditions of the permit. APVMA permit PER11463 expires 30 April 2027.

Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.