

# Elephant ear vine

*Argyreia nervosa*



Elephant ear vine is an aggressive invader of rainforest and other tropical forest communities. It has been transported across the world for use as a garden ornamental and as a source of LCD-like drugs (from its seeds).

## Legal requirements

Elephant ear 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 measures to minimise the biosecurity 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 elephant ear vine. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

## Description

Elephant ear vine is a robust climber with woody stems. It can overtop trees up to 10 m high.

Young stems and leaf undersides have dense white downy hairs. Leaves are heart-shaped and up to 25 cm wide with prominent venation.



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Flowers appear in clusters and are lavender to pink (the throat darker), trumpet-shaped and 5 cm across. Has round white berries.

## Life cycle

Flowering occurs mainly during spring and summer. Fruit each have 3–4 seeds. The fruits do not burst open when mature, it relies on the fruit decaying or birds and mammals ingesting it. Also known to reproduce by vegetative fragmentation.

## Methods of spread

Berries are dispersed by fruit-eating birds and mammals. Plants are spread by people as an ornamental plant.

## Habitat and distribution

Native to India (i.e. from Assam to Belgaum and Mysore) and Myanmar. Elephant ear vine has sometimes been listed as native to Australia in the past, and this is because there is some doubt as to whether aboriginals may have introduced this species prior to European settlement. Elephant ear vine is also naturalised on some Pacific islands (i.e. Hawaii, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Tonga), in south-eastern USA (i.e. Florida), in Central America (i.e. Panama, Belize, Nicaragua and Puerto Rico), in the Mascarenes (i.e. La Reunion) and in tropical Africa (i.e. Ghana).

Elephant ear vine is scattered across a large area of coastal northern and central Queensland. Specimens have been recorded at numerous locations within these regions, including around Townsville (i.e. at Mount Elliot and in the Townsville Town Common), on the Cape York Peninsula, and in the Cooktown, Ingham, Bowen and Callopie areas. It is particularly abundant around the Peter Faust Dam near Bowen.

Elephant ear vine is commonly cultivated in home gardens.

## Control

### Managing elephant ear vine

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

### Physical control

Dig up isolated plants and small infestations, making sure that all roots and stem fragments are removed. Plant pieces should either be bagged and taken to the dump or hung up off the ground to prevent reshooting.

### Herbicide control

There are no herbicide products specifically registered for the control of elephant ear vine in Queensland. However, a permit allows people generally to use some herbicide products to control elephant ear 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](http://apvma.gov.au).

### Follow up

Monitor treated areas regularly for any new seedlings or regrowth.

### More information

For more information contact your local government or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

**Table 1. Herbicides for the control of elephant ear vine**

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Registration details	Comments
Non-agricultural areas, domestic and public service areas, commercial and industrial areas, bushland/native forests, roadsides, rights-of-way, vacant lots, wastelands, dunal and coastal areas	Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Conqueror) or Triclopyr 300 g/L + Picloram 100 g/L (e.g. Grazon Extra)	350 mL to 500 mL per 100 L water plus wetting agent or spray oil	APVMA permit PER11463 (Permit expires 30/04/2027)	Spot spray
	2,4-D 300 g/L + Picloram 75 g/L (e.g. Tordon 75-D)	1 L per 100 L water plus wetting agent		Spot spray (young plants less than 2 m)

**Read the label carefully before use. Always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.**

