

Magnetic Island Weeds Guide

MARCH 2018 EDITION



A guide to the identification
and control of the worst weeds
on Magnetic Island

Protecting our natural environment from weeds

Weeds left unchecked threaten our islands' natural environment. Local community organisations including Magnetic Island Nature Care Association (MINCA), Magnetic Island Community Development Association (MICDA), Magnetic Island National Park Volunteers (MINPV), Geoffrey Bay/Olympus Crescent Coastcare and many local residents are actively controlling weeds on Magnetic Island.

The information in this guide is based on local experience, and we hope it will help other nature-carers and gardeners protect our environment over the years to come.

- Learn to identify weeds and their seedlings, and remove them before they become a problem. Try to identify the source of the infestation.
- Remove weeds before they set seed. If seeds are present collect them carefully first and dispose of them so they can't spread.
- Weeds with windblown seeds are a particular threat to the whole island and are a priority for eradication.
- Remove scattered weeds first (the colonisers) to contain the infestation.
- If you are unsure about a weed, contact one of the groups on the back page for help.
- TOXIC! Some species have toxic leaves, sap or seeds, so take care with these. Wear gloves if possible and be careful not to get sap in your eyes.
- There will nearly always be a seed bank in the soil around weeds, and broken roots can re-sprout, so keep monitoring treated areas for regrowth, especially after rain. Most seeds remain viable for years. Success comes with careful persistence.
- Chemical control should be used as a last resort. Herbicides are a danger to users and the environment, so always comply with the label.
- Take care when applying herbicide. Don't damage adjacent native plants and make sure the herbicide won't be flushed into watercourses by rain.
- Only apply herbicide when plants are actively growing.

!! ALERT WEEDS !!

These are new weeds to the island and a major threat. They need to be eradicated before they can become further established. If you think you have found either species **please contact the local Queensland Parks and Wildlife office immediately on 4778 5378.**

Early control is absolutely essential. Both species are vigorous invaders with wind-distributed seeds, so do not let the flowers mature into puffballs of seed. If flowers or puffballs are present they need to be very carefully cut off and bagged for secure disposal.



Praxelis *Praxelis clematidea*

This is a highly invasive perennial herb species. Similar to Bluetop (*Ageratum sp.*) but with a more coarsely serrated and pointed leaf that smells like cat's urine when crushed. Fluffy blue flowers turn to puff balls as seeds ripen. Toxic!



CONTROL METHOD:

Do not touch! Contact QPWS **4778 5378** immediately!



Siam Weed *Chromolaena odorata*

A highly invasive shrub species with windblown seeds. There was an infestation on Mt Cook so seedlings can appear anywhere. Leaves have three prominent veins branching from the leaf base. Younger leaves have a purple tinge. Grows and branches like lantana.

CONTROL METHOD:

Do not touch! Contact QPWS **4778 5378** or Biosecurity Qld on **13 25 23** immediately!



Weed Control Methods

HAND PULL: Most seedlings and small plants can be hand-pulled. Make sure you remove the root as these will usually re-sprout. It is easier to weed after rain when the ground is softer and the plants are still small. Always make sure seeds are collected and disposed of properly.

CUT STUMP: Where the plant is too large to pull, or the roots are amongst rocks, the plant can be treated with a basal bark spray, or the stem cut no more than 15cm above ground level, and the cut surface sprayed or painted immediately with the appropriate herbicide. In some cases simply cutting the stem and repeatedly removing new suckers as they appear will finally exhaust and kill the plant.

FOLIAR SPRAY: The foliage of dense infestations can be sprayed with herbicide. Remember natives amongst the weeds will be killed too.

FURTHER INFORMATION: For more information on control and herbicides, visit www.daff.qld.gov.au/plants/weeds-pest-animals-ants/weeds/control-methods or see the back page of this guide.

Remember! Some weeds will have thorns or toxins. We recommend that you wear gloves.

Photography courtesy of J. Rains, Sheldon Navie, Forest and Kim Starr, Chris Gardiner, NQ Dry Tropics, Everyone's Environment Project participants, Environmental Weeds of Australia, North Queensland Conservation Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Ajaytao Photography, F.L Bellec and weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au



Barleria

Barleria prionitius

A small bush with large thorns and yellow flowers.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull.



Bauhinia

Bauhinia variegata

Native species (*Bauhinia hookeri*) has white flowers.

CONTROL METHOD:
Cut Stump.



Australian Beardgrass or Caucasian Bluestem

Bothriochloa bladhii

A rapidly spreading invading tall grass seen along West Point Road and along road down to Arthur Bay.

CONTROL METHOD:
Cut around roots with a sharp knife and remove whole plant, or spray with glyphosate.



Bellyache Bush

Jatropha gossypifolia

Shrub with reddish new growth. Leaves with three lobes.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull. Wear gloves. Toxic.



Captain Cook Tree

Thevetia peruviana

Common in urban gardens. Some bushland infestations, particularly on urban interface. This is the yellow flowered oleander.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull seedlings. Cut stump and paint with herbicide a few days after cutting. Toxic sap.



Castor Oil Plant

Ricinus communis

Seeds very long lived.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull when small. Collect seeds and cut stump when larger. Ripe seeds explode so wear eye protection. Toxic.



Cobbler's Peg

Bidens bipinata

Finely dissected leaves. White daisy forms long seeds with paired barbs at one end.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull.



Cockscomb

Celosia argentea

Known infestations in Nelly Bay. Seen in gardens. Numerous seeds!

CONTROL METHOD:
Remove seeds. Foliar spray. Hand pull.



Hyptis (Horehound)

Hyptis suaveolens

Heavily scented leaf and square stem.

CONTROL METHOD:
Hand pull before flowers dry and set seed.



Indian Couch

Bothriochloa pertusa

Common in mowed areas and along tracks. Slight peppery smell to crushed leaf. Hairy leaf nodes.

CONTROL METHOD:
Runners root at nodes. Tough roots so a knife can help. Remove and bag flower spikes.



Coral Vine

Antigonon leptopus

CONTROL METHOD:
Trace stems back to the root tuber. This must be dug out or cut stump, or the vine will regrow from it.



Glory Lily

Gloriosa superba

CONTROL METHOD:
Dig out rhizomatous roots. Toxic!



Lantana *Lantana camara*

Two varieties: orange lantana (bright green leaf and large spikes on stems, and a particularly vigorous invader), and pink/purple lantana (more common but easier to control).

CONTROL METHOD: For small plants pull the whole plant out and turn upside down to dry. For larger plants cut branches about 50cm from base and move stems around to find weakest direction, and location of surface roots. Cut roots near base and pull out as much root as possible. Don't break up branches as they can root and grow in wet soil. Cut stump for hard to remove roots.



Guinea Grass

Panicum maximum

Common tall grass in disturbed areas.

CONTROL METHOD:
Cut around roots with a sharp knife and remove whole plant, or slash regularly.

WEED CHEMICAL WARNING:

If using herbicide to control weeds always follow the instructions on the label and wear protective clothing.



Leucaena *Leucaena leucocephala*

These are prolific seeders and the seeds are viable for a very long time.

CONTROL METHOD: Cut stump larger plants and pull or foliar spray small plants.



Mother-In-Law's Tongue *Sansevieria spp*

Very variable tough strap leaf. Larger infestations have a dense network of tough rhizomes.

CONTROL METHOD: Dig plant out, removing all parts. For larger infestations spray herbicide in the centre of the growing stem end when the plant is actively growing.



Moses-In-The-Cradle

Tradescantia spathacea

Popular garden plant. Very invasive.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull.



Merremia Vine

Aggressive vines with white tubular flowers. Both species have five or more fingered leaves.

M. quinquefolia has flowers to 1.5cm diameter and undissected leaf margins.

M. dissecta has larger leaflets with deeply dissected margins, and larger flowers.

CONTROL METHOD:

Hand pull, trace back to the tap root and remove it.



Mother of Millions *Bryophyllum spp*

Variable succulent. The individual leaves grow new plants.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull, bag and put in garbage. Small plants and dropped leaves are easy to miss so follow up essential.

STOP THE SPREAD OF WEEDS! (WEED HYGIENE)

Stop the spread of weeds by stopping the spread of seeds. Always clean down machinery, equipment and clothing after working in weedy areas, and before moving machinery to other areas. If you use a contractor, make sure they properly clean their machinery before coming onto your land.



Passionfruit *Passiflora foetida* & *Passiflora suberosa*

Invasive vines with fruits eaten and seeds spread by birds. Native species (*P. aurantia*) has spectacular red flowers.

Passiflora foetida: Stinking passion vine. Soft, hairy, pale green leaves, very smelly when crushed. Large soft fruit turning orange.

Passiflora suberosa: Corky passion vine. Tougher, dark green, smooth, usually strongly lobed leaves but may be entire, and pale corky bark on older stems. Small dark fruit.

CONTROL METHOD: Trace stems back to tap root and pull or dig out. Make sure stems on ground aren't rooted.



Periwinkle *Catharanthus roseus*

Common in disturbed areas. Popular garden plant. Pink or white flowers. Long lived seeds.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull. Toxic!

PLEASE DON'T DUMP YOUR GARDEN WASTE

Some plants can re-grow from small pieces, especially succulents, so please don't dump your garden waste over the fence or in the bush. Start a small pile in a handy place in your garden and compost it. Parts that are hard to kill can be covered with black plastic or put in the bin.



Rangoon Creeper

Quisqualis indica

A woody vine with spikes on stems, and clusters of red flowers on long narrow floral tubes.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull or cut stump.

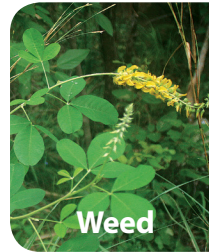


Red Natal Grass

Melinis repens

Fluffy red seeds turn white when older.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull, and bag seeds.



Rattlepods

Be careful not to pull native species. The most common weed species are:

Crotalaria pallida,
Crotalaria laburnifolia and
Crotalaria gorensis.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull is the best method. Remove seedpods.



Yellow Rattlepod (Native) *Crotalaria mitchelli*.

WEED OR NATIVE?

Many weeds look similar to native plants so it's important to make sure you're removing the right plant. See page 14 for our quick guide or contact any of the groups at the rear of this guide if you require assistance.



Rubber Vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora*

Robust vine easily seen when flowering. Seeds are wind distributed and seedlings can appear anywhere.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull seedlings. On larger plants cut stump as low as possible and poison. Keep an eye out in subsequent years for seedlings germinating in the vicinity of treated plants.



Singapore Daisy

Sphagnetica trilobata

Aggressive creeping vine with yellow daisy flowers. Mostly urban areas, especially creek lines.

CONTROL METHOD: Foliar spray larger areas. Hand pull small areas, taking care to get every part.



Siratro

Macroptilium atropurpureum

Invasive vine with deep purple pea flowers, long thin pods and rough greyish trefoil leaves. Mainly along roadsides.

CONTROL METHOD: Trace stems back to tap root and hand pull, or cut root as deeply as possible.



Sisal Hemp

Agave sisalana

Mainly urban fringes from garden escapes.

CONTROL METHOD: Dig out small infestations. Larger infestations can be controlled with herbicide. Call QPWS for advice.



Snakeweed

Stachytarpheta jamaicensis

Significant infestations in urban areas and bush blocks. Especially widespread in Horseshoe Bay.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull. Slash or foliar spray larger infestations.



Triumfetta Burr

Triumfetta rhomboidea

Small yellow flowers forming clusters of small spikey balls. Leaves have a slight lemon smell when crushed.

CONTROL METHOD: Collect seeds and hand pull.



Thunbergia

Thunbergia spp

Aggressive vine. Several different species present on island in or near urban areas.

CONTROL METHOD: If seedlings, hand pull and hang in adjacent trees to dry. For older plants use cut stump. Contact Townsville City Council on 1300 878 001 for advice.



Yellow Bells

Tecoma stans

Mostly in urban areas and some infestations on bushland.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull seedlings, cut stump larger plants.



White Eye

Mitracarpus hirtus

Small annual herb with pairs of dark green leaves and small ball-shaped flowers at the leaf bases. Commonly found in gardens and roadsides. The tiny seeds are easily spread.

CONTROL METHOD: Hand pull or foliar spray a broad leaf selective herbicide.

Weeds that look like native plants

WEED

Guinea Grass

Panicum maximum



LOOK FOR: The weed has flattened leaf bases, hairy nodes and is a tussock grass. The native has underground runners and smooth, round leaf stems.

Hyptis (Horehound)

Hyptis suaveolens



LOOK FOR: Hyptis has strongly smelling leaves when crushed, the native mintweed doesn't. Be careful on rocky areas where you might see the native *Plectranthus diversus*, which also has strong smelling leaves. Do not pull on rocky areas unless sure.

Streaked Rattlepod

Crotalaria pallida



LOOK FOR: Both have leaves with three leaflets, but the native has smaller, tougher leaves and tiny seed pods.

NATIVE

Blady Grass

Imperata cylindrica



Native Mintweed

Anisomeles malabarica



You can help - simply volunteer!

Learn more about weeds, help protect our island's environment and connect with people and nature by joining a local group of volunteers. Simply register your interest by contacting:

Magnetic Island National Park Volunteers

Carolyn Dixon, Volunteer Coordinator

P: 07 4774 1414 **E:** dixonbailey@hotmail.net.au

Magnetic Island Nature Care

Gethin Morgan

P: 07 4778 5019 **E:** president@minca.org

Geoffrey Bay Coast Care

Tony O'Malley

P: 0437 728 190 **E:** anthonyomswim@gmail.com

More Information

USEFUL WEBSITES

Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants

<http://keys.trin.org.au/key-server/data/0e0f0504-0103-430d-8004-060d07080d04/media/Html/index.html>

Weed and Pest Animal Fact Sheets

<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/plants/weeds-pest-animals-ants/educational-resources-and-careers/publications/fact-sheets>

Weeds of Australia, Biosecurity Queensland Edition

<https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/index.htm>

Some Magnetic Island Plants

<https://www.somemagneticislandplants.com.au/index.php>

Plants of Magnetic Island (3rd Edition) by Betsey Jackes

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/discover-nature-at-jcu/plants/plants-of-magnetic-island-3rd-edition>

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on weeds and alternative local native species to grow in your garden, contact:

NQ Dry Tropics

P: 07 4724 3544

E: info@nqdrytropics.com.au **W:** nqdrytropics.com.au

Townsville City Council - Land Protection

P: 1300 878 001

E: enquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au **W:** townsville.qld.gov.au

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service - Magnetic Island

P: 07 4778 5378

This brochure is downloadable from whatsonmagneticisland.com.au



MAGNETIC ISLAND
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION



Magnetic
Island
Nature
Care Inc.



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