

# 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 photosynthesize. 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 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 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.

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 measures to minimise the biosecurity 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, two permits allow the use of some herbicide products to control balloon vine as an invasive plant in various situations.

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

Prior to using the herbicides listed under these permits (PER11463 and PER12363) 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).

More information

More information is available from your local government office or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of balloon vine or heart seed 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, wetlands, dunal and coastal areas	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Weedmaster Duo) and other formulations	1 part to two parts water (e.g. 10 mL in 20 mL water) For other formulations consult the permit PER11463	APVMA permit PER11463 (expires 30/04/2027)	Cut stump and paint. Apply in spring and summer. Apply second application if necessary.
	MCPA 500 g/L (e.g. Nufarm MCPA 500)	75–150 mL per 15 L water		Spot spray Add a wetting agent as per label instructions.
	2,4-D Amine 300 g/L (e.g. Conquest Amine 300 )	Up to 95 mL per 15 L water		Spot spray Refer to product label for critical use comments.
	2,4-D Amine 625 g/L (Nufarm 2,4-D Amine 625)	Up to 45 mL per 15 L water		Foliar spray
	Triclopyr 50 g/L (e.g. Amgrow Chemspray Weed Control Tree & Blackberry Killer)	600 mL per 15 L water		Basal bark spray or cut stump application.
		200 mL per 1 L of kerosene or Biosafe		
Natural ecosystems (non-agricultural)	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Weedmaster Duo)	1:50 (glyphosate:water)	APVMA permit PER12363 for use by officers/ contractors of government agencies, QPWS, or NRM groups	Aerial spot spray from helicopter or unmanned aircraft vehicles.
	Glyphosate 360 g/L (e.g. Weedmaster Duo) + Metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg (e.g. Associate)	1:50 glyphosate + 1.5 g metsulfuron-methyl/10 L		

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