Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Cat's Claw Creeper Plan

2026 – 2031

Cover photograph

Cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*)

Version 1: Approved June 2026

Cat's claw creeper at Moora

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

Table of Contents

Cat's claw creeper flower (Cat's claw creeper)

Introduction

Cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) is a biosecurity threat due to its highly invasive and adaptable characteristics impacting waterways, forests and urban environments.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has been preventing cat's claw creeper establishing in Western Australia (WA) since 2003, but small outbreaks continue to be detected.

DPIRD recognises that the early detection and eradication of these small outbreaks is crucial in preventing the spread of the weed.

This plan outlines the activities to be undertaken by DPIRD in controlling and managing cat's claw creeper in WA over the next 5 years. As there are so few reports of cat's claw creeper found in WA, eradication is still considered feasible.

DPIRD recognises that landholders, local government and other state government agencies play a key role in assisting with the early detection and control of cat's claw creeper.

Aim

To prevent the establishment of cat's claw creeper in WA.

Governance

Landholders are responsible for managing pests on their land, while DPIRD is responsible for protecting WA's agricultural resources from biosecurity threats under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act) and associated regulations.

The Invasive Species Operations section leads the implementation and reporting on this plan. The Invasive Species Planning section will evaluate this plan in 2031.

New detections will be managed in accordance with this plan.

Important links

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, (2024*). Invasive vines – National best practice management manual for cat's claw creeper (Dolichandra unguis-cati) and Madeira vine (Anredera cordifolia)*. Weeds of National Significance 2024. wildmatters.com.au Invasive Vines
- Weeds Australia (2025) *Cat's Claw Vine* https://weeds.org.au/profiles/cats-claw-vine/
- Department of Primary Industries, Queensland (2026) Cat's claw creeper Fact Sheet

Report sightings via:

- An online report at mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au or
- Use the MyPestGuide reporter app, or
- Phone: (08) 9368 3080, or
- email: padis@dpird.wa.gov.au

Context

The problem

Cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) is native to tropical central and south America. It is a long-lived woody creeper with claw-like tendrils under the leaves and large tubular yellow flowers.

Figure 1 – Cat's claw creeper showing tubers, seedling from tuber and aerial roots (2024, Invasive vines, Australian Government)

Invasive characteristics include:

- Vigorous growth and aerial roots (Figure 1) that form dense mats smothering native vegetation, climbing tall trees and/or covering forest floors.
- Although preferring riparian and rainforest communities, it is adaptable and can tolerate drought, frost and salt water due to its extensive and long-lived tuberous root systems.
- Reproduces vegetatively via its extensive tuberous root system and by winged seeds, which are easily spread by wind and water.

Even though the plant has many seeds, seed viability is low and it has a short-lived seed bank (2026, Department of Primary Industries Queensland).

The creeper alters native environments and ecological communities and especially impacts forestry and infrastructure such as power poles and lines. It hampers access tracks as it tends to follow trails and pathways. In urban environments it will cover sheds, fences and roofs. It is extremely difficult to remove due to the tendrils and aerial roots that adhere to surfaces often creating further damage.

Legal status

Cat's claw creeper is a declared weed under section 12(1) of the BAM Act and is assigned to control category C1, denoting the plant is to be excluded from the state and eradicated when found.

As a prohibited declared weed, cat's claw creeper is not permitted to be propagated or sold in WA and any plants found are to be eradicated. All landholders have a legal obligation to control a declared species under the BAM Act.

Distribution

Introduced to Australia as early as 1865 in Victoria for its ornamental value, cat's claw creeper has since spread to now be prevalent throughout tropical, subtropical and some temperate regions of Queensland and New South Wales, where it has escaped from backyards into a range of natural landscapes (DAFF, 2024). Figure 2 shows where cat's claw creeper has been recorded across Australia.

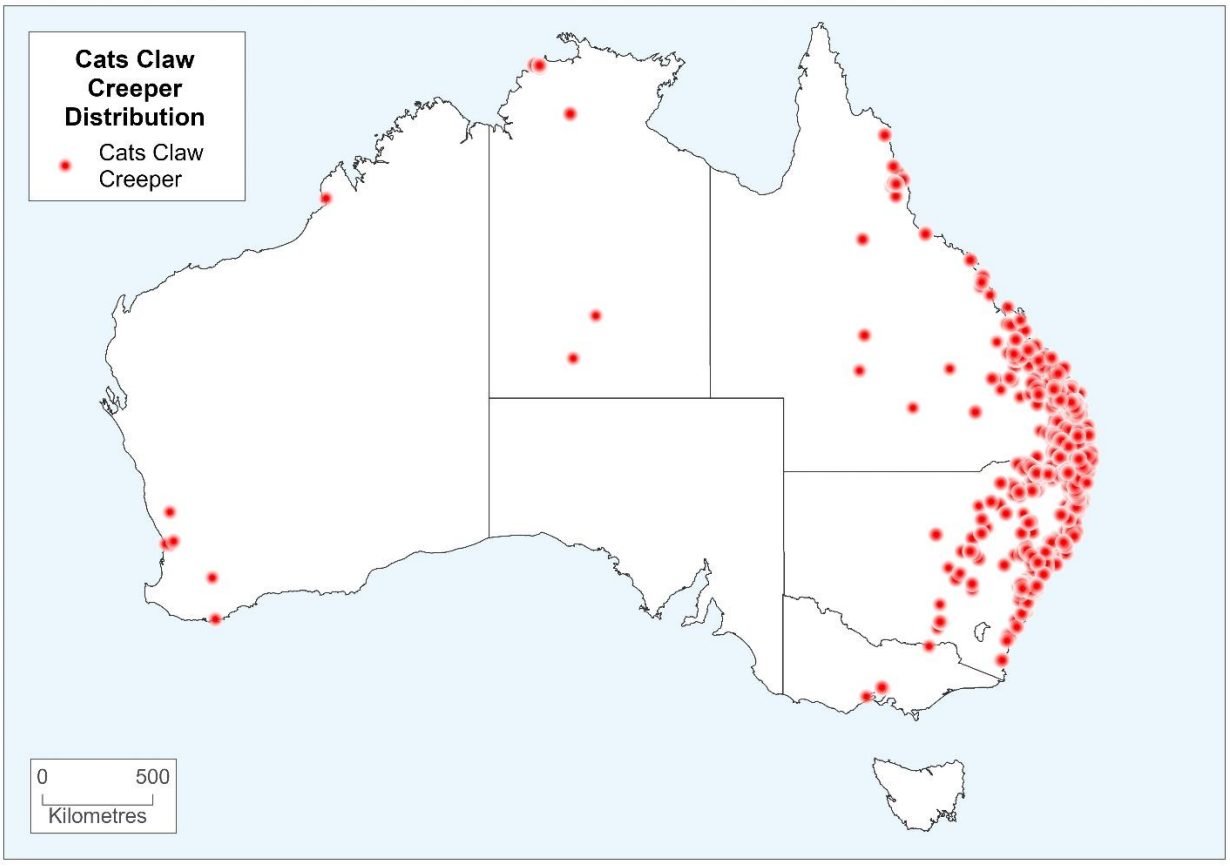

Figure 2 – Cat's claw creeper reports across Australia
(Atlas of Living Australia accessed on 19 May 2026)

Distribution in WA

Climate modelling suggests that WA is largely an unsuitable climate for cat's claw creeper to thrive, but small pockets continue to occur (Figure 3). Plants have been recorded across the Perth metropolitan area, and regional areas such as Dumbleyung, Broome, Albany and most recently Moora, with detections reported mostly by landholders. The vine appears to spread slowly in the less suitable areas in southwest WA.

Table 1 summarises detection sites and their current stage in the eradication process. These are the known sites, and it is likely that there are more sites in backyards yet to be detected, as there is anecdotal evidence that cat's claw creeper was popular in the WA nursery trade in the 1980s.

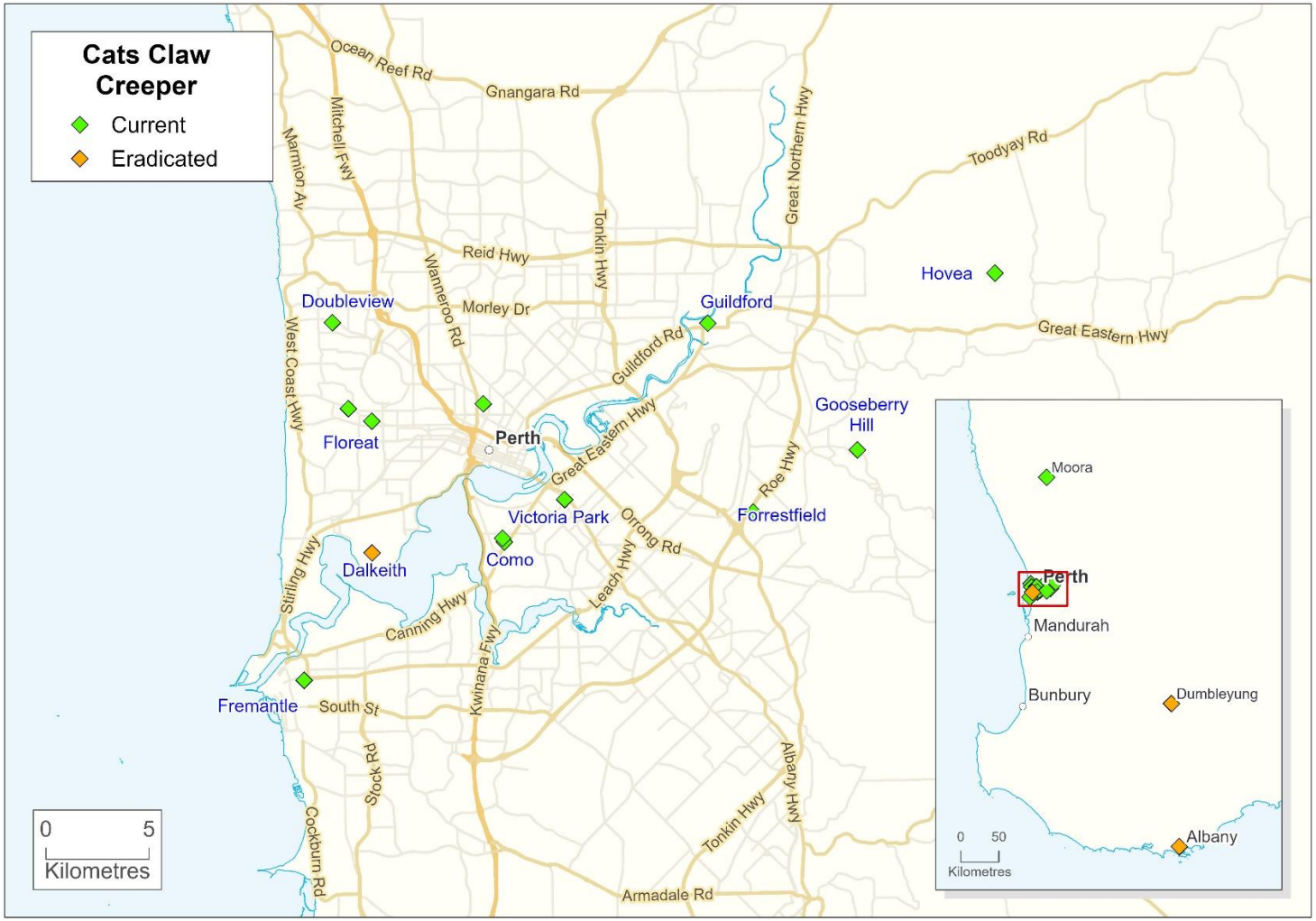

Figure 3 – Cat's claw creeper sites

Table 1 – Current cat's claw creeper sites and their eradication status

Site	Initial detection date	Last treatment date	Last inspection date	Expected eradication timeframe*
Forrestfield – Pioneer Park	Jun 2019	Feb 2022	Apr 2026	2027
Gooseberry Hill – Farrant St	Aug 2025	Aug 2025	Apr 2026	2030
Moora – Stafford St	Oct 2025	Dec 2025	Dec 2025	2031
Floreat – Orrel St	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	Apr 2026	2031
Floreat – Donegal St	Nov 2025	Apr 2026	Apr 2026	2031
Doubleview – Flamborough St	Feb 2024	May 2026	May 2026	2031
Hovea – Falls Rd	Dec 2024	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	2031
North Perth – View St	Nov 2025	Apr 2026	Apr 2026	2031
Fremantle – Blinco St	Jun 2021	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	2031
Guildford – Swan St and Meadow St	May 2024	Pending	May 2026	-
Como – McDonald St	Nov 2025	Pending	Apr 2026	-
Como – Hazel St	Apr 2026	Pending	Apr 2026	-
Como – Canning Hwy	Jun 2026	Jun 2026	Jun 2026	2031
Victoria Park – Cargill St	Mar 2026	Pending	Apr 2026	-
Dalkeith	Jun 2021	Dec 2021	Apr 2026	Eradicated
Broome	2003	-	-	Eradicated
Dumbleyung	2000s	-	-	Eradicated
Albany	2000s	-	-	Eradicated

*NB – Eradication date means there has been no further detection of cat's claw creeper at the site for 5 consecutive years.

Control methods

Cat's claw creeper is easier to detect when the plant is flowering in spring.

Control typically requires herbicide application, by either foliar spraying the leaves, painting the cut stems or drilling and injecting herbicide into the tuberous roots. Manual removal is only feasible for very small infestations. Old plants will have massive root systems and earth moving equipment may assist in removing the bulk of an infestation, but it will also require follow up treatments with herbicides or more removal events.

As plants can easily regrow from the tubers, multiple herbicide applications are usually required within the first couple of months with annual inspections over a period of 3 to 5 years, to ensure the plants are eradicated.

Refer to Appendix A for detail on how to control cat's claw creeper.

Landholders have a legislative obligation under the BAM Act to manage declared pests on their land. Landholders are encouraged to treat plants themselves and engage contractors or DPIRD if required.

Actions

Action	Task
Detect and delineate	Inspect sites when reported to confirm detections.
	Survey surrounding area to delineate the area and extent of the infestation.
	Confirm identification of all reports.
	Engage with the community surrounding a detection via various media platforms to raise local awareness and assist in determining if other infestations exist nearby, as appropriate.
	Consider inclusion of cat's claw creeper in DPIRD's media campaigns, such as, '*Biosecurity Blitz*', *Backyard buddies* 'or '*Garden Thugs'* during the flowering season to encourage public reporting.
	Audit historic cat's claw creeper sites – Dumbleyung, Albany and Broome to ensure no reinfestation.
Treat	Work with the property owners to treat site/s with an approved herbicide or agreed control method (Appendix A).
	Dispose of treated vines to ensure no regrowth/reinfestation and to assist with future inspections (Appendix A).
Monitor and report	Undertake 6 monthly follow up inspections of a site from the last treatment date for up to 5 years.
	Provide an annual update on the current status of the cat's claw creeper sites.
Declare area of freedom	If no evidence of the creeper per site for 5 consecutive years after the last treatment, then, declare the area free from cat's claw creeper, with no further inspections required.

Cat's claw creeper NSW (NSW WeedWise)

Appendix

Appendix A – Best practice control methods

Cut-Stump Method:
Use: Best for large, mature vines climbing trees.
Action: Cut the vine at two points: first at 1–2 metres high to clear the area, then again as close to the ground as possible.
Application: Immediately apply neat glyphosate or Vigilant Gel (within 15 seconds) to the vine stumps that have been freshly cut.

Scrape-and-Paint:
Use: Ideal for smaller vines (less than 1 cm diameter stems) or as an alternative for medium stems.
Action: Use a knife or saw to scrape a 20–50 cm strip of bark to expose the living tissue (sapwood) without cutting through the stem.
Application: Apply glyphosate or Vigilant Gel herbicide directly to the scraped area within 15 seconds.

Stem Injection (Drill and Fill):
Use: Used for exceptionally thick, woody stems and tubers.
Action: Drill holes approximately 10 cm apart around the stem or directly into visible underground tubers.
Application: Fill holes with undiluted glyphosate or triclopyr/picloram herbicide immediately after drilling.

Foliar Spraying:
Use: Most effective for ground-covering mats, seedlings, regrowth under 2 metres tall or vines growing on fences and buildings.
Constraint: Avoid spraying vines in trees to prevent ‘off target' damage to the host plant.
Action: Spray actively growing leaves until they are wet but not dripping (point of run-off) with:
- Glyphosate360 (e.g., Roundup) 100 mL per 10 L of water.
- Dicamba500 (more selective) 40 mL per 10 L of water.
- Picloram + triclopyr (residual herbicide will control seedlings for 12 months) 50 mL per 10 L water.

Management Tips:
Timing: Apply between September and May when the plant is actively growing for maximum absorption.
Dye: Mix dye with the herbicide to easily track which stems have already been treated.
Long-term commitment: Chemical treatment rarely kills all tubers in one go. Monitor and retreat regrowth 2–3 times a year for at least 5 years to exhaust the underground tuber bank.

Vine Disposal:
Solarisation: Place plant material in sealed black bags and leave them to dry for approximately six months before disposing of them in landfill.
Complete drying of tubers and plant parts: Hang to air-dry thoroughly until fully desiccated, then dispose of in landfill.