



# Biosecurity alert: Cat's claw creeper

*(Dolichandra unguis-cati)*

Image credit © State of New South Wales

## The pest and its impacts

Cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*), is a long-lived woody climber or creeper with distinctive claw-like tendrils and large tubular yellow flowers. It is a declared pest, prohibited in Western Australia, (control category C1 Exclusion) and a Weed of National Significance. It must be eradicated if found.

It is an aggressive environmental weed that was introduced as a garden ornamental and is still often found growing in gardens across Australia.

## Cat's claw creeper characteristics

- invades bushland, waterways, gardens, and roadsides
- ability to climb and completely smother and kill groundcover, shrubs and trees
- reproduces by seed and its tuberous root system
- seeds and roots disperse by wind and/or water, and spread in soil by human activity
- difficult to control due to abundant seed production and ability to resprout from tubers.



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## LOOK for this pest

- woody vine with climbing stems and underground tubers
- leaves – compound, oppositely arranged on stalks 5 to 25 mm long. Leaflets are paired, oval to elongated, with a third leaflet modified into a tendril with 3 small claws, each 3 to 17 mm long.
- flowers – bright yellow, tubular with 5 lobes, appearing in spring and summer
- fruit – long, narrow pods that turn dark brown as they mature, containing numerous papery winged seeds

### Key points

- If found, hand-pull small plants, ensuring removal of all tubers.
- Cut and paint larger vines with appropriate herbicide.
- Do not compost plant material – bag and deep-bury or burn.
- Movement is prohibited – landholders must eradicate plants on their property.



Woody vine with seed pods



Claw tendril close up



## REPORT suspected sightings

- Be aware of unusual vines smothering native vegetation
- Prompt action is essential to prevent spread
- Note the date, time, and location of the pest
- Take clear photographs of leaves, flowers and fruit.



### Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter  
via app or online  
[mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au](http://mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au)

Pest and Disease Information Service  
08 9368 3080  
[padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au)

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