

Blue passion flower

Passiflora caerulea

Family

Passifloraceae (passionfruit)

Also known as

Bluecrown passionflower

Where is it originally from?

Brazil to Argentina

What does it look like?

Vigorous evergreen, high-climbing vine (<6+ m) with long stems that are hairless and angular when young and which have spiralling tendrils. Leaves are very thin and 5-lobed almost to the base, with each lobe 3-8 cm long and narrow. Hanging whitish purple flowers (6-9 cm diameter, Dec-Apr) with purple filaments are followed by hanging round fruit (3-5 cm diameter) that ripens from green to yellow, has small amounts of inedible pulp, and contains silver-brown seeds (4 mm long).

Are there any similar species?

Passiflora mollissima, *P. mixta*, and *P. edulis*.

Why is it weedy?

Spreads into natural areas and smothering native plants. Its seed is spread by birds and possums, and it also grows from layering, where stems touch the ground, forming roots and new plants. Disperses effectively, grows quickly to medium to high canopy forming large masses, and stems layer. Tolerates damage, drought, hot to cold temperatures and moderate shade.

How does it spread?

Birds and possums carry seeds moderate distances. Often used as rootstock for *P. edulis*. Hedges, nurseries, exotic plantations, waste land, gardens and roadsides are common seed sources.

What damage does it do?

Smothers canopy, can strangle host stems, and prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings. Appears in light wells away from parent plant.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed and open forest, light wells and margins of intact bush, streamsides, coastline and cliffs.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Physical removal: Dig or pull out scattered plants. Dispose of plant material at a landfill or refuse transfer station.
2. Cut and paste: Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply glyphosate gel (120g/L strength) or metsulfuron gel (10g/L strength) or picloram gel (43g/l strength) to the entire cut stem.
3. Foliar spray application: Apply triclopyr herbicide (600g/L active ingredient) at a rate of 6ml/L plus 2.5ml/L organosilicone wetter, such as Pulse penetrant, to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Triclopyr is 'grass friendly' but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants. Do not use over water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stems layer, stumps resprout so followup and control as needed to eradicate. A few seedlings may appear in bared



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Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

areas. Use herbicide only when roots cannot be pulled.