

Watsonia*

– *Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*



Spanish Heath

– *Erica lusitana*



Photo: SYR

Spanish Heath

- *Erica lusitanica*



Common Name: Spanish Heath
Scientific Name: *Erica lusitanica*

Origin: Native to Spain, Portugal and France.
Size: Spanish Heath is an evergreen, slender erect woody shrub that grows to 2m in height. It is often mistaken for the native Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*).
Foliage: 4 - 7mm long needle-like leaves crowded along branches.
Flowers: The papery flowers are in hanging clusters of 3 or 4 on the ends of very short side branchlets. They appear in winter to early spring and vary from white to pink. The dead brown flowers stay on the plant before seeding in spring to early summer.

How it spreads

This plant can produce 9 million tiny, dust-like seeds each year. These are mainly spread by wind, but also by water, animals, garden waste and in contaminated soil. The plant can also expand locally through its spreading root system.

Not to be confused with:

Spanish Heath is sometimes confused with the floral emblem of Victoria, the Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*, right), which is a smaller, spiky plant, with larger, more tubular, pink or white flowers.



Photo: SYR



Watsonia*

- *Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*



Common Name: Watsonia, Bulbil Watsonia
Scientific Name: *Watsonia meriana* var. *bulbillifera*

Origin: Native to South Africa.
Size: Leaves grow up to 80cm tall with the flower spikes up to 2m high
Foliage: The leaves arising from the base of the plant are rigid, straight and sword-shaped with a prominent mid-vein, up to 80cms.
Flowers: The plant blooms in spring and the flower spikes can stand up to 2m. They bear two rows of dull orange, curved tubular flowers. The lower part of the flower spike carries clusters of bulbils (see below).
Fruit: Watsonia rarely forms seed.

How it spreads

Watsonia spreads mainly by producing new corms (a corm is the swollen stem that forms the base of the plant) and by dropping the bulbils (photo, right) from the flower spike. Each bulbil then grows into a new plant. Corms and bulbils are spread in water, contaminated soil and dumped garden waste.



Photo: S. Meacher

Not to be confused with:

When there are no flowers, distinguish from the native Swordsedges (*Lepidosperma* spp.).



* Declared Noxious Weed



Blue Periwinkle

- *Vinca major*



Common Name: Blue Periwinkle

Scientific Name: *Vinca major*

Origin: Native to the Mediterranean region.

Size: A trailing plant with tough stems that can grow to a few metres in length.

Foliage: Leaves are usually a shiny dark green above and paler green below, sometimes variegated. They are a broad, pointed-oval shape and are placed in pairs opposite each other on the stems and at right angles to the pairs above and below.

Flowers: The flowers are 3 - 5cm across, have 5 mauve-blue petals and appear in spring and summer.

Fruit: Little or no seed dispersal.

How it spreads

This plant mainly spreads vegetatively. Stems grow up and arch over, taking root where they touch the soil. Stem fragments will also root from leaf nodes. They are spread by water, wind, in dumped garden waste and contaminated soil.

Not to be confused with:

A related periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) is also a weed in the Dandenong Ranges.



Angled Onion*

- *Allium triquetrum*



Common Name: Angled Onion, Onion Weed

Scientific Name: *Allium triquetrum*

Origin: Native to the Mediterranean region

Size: 18 - 40 cm tall. Usually less than 30cm.

Foliage: The strap-like leaves (to 50cm long) grow mostly from the base and have a strong onion/garlic odour, especially when mowed or slashed. Dies back over summer to resprout in autumn.

Flowers: It produces white, drooping bell-shaped flowers in August to November. Each petal has a central green stripe. The flower stalk is triangular in cross-section.

* Declared Noxious Weed

How it spreads

Angled Onion reproduces by bulbs that spread underground to grow into new plants. The plant also produces seeds which are easily transported by water, machinery (e.g. lawnmowers) soil movement and by dumping garden waste in bushland areas. It is still sold at markets, fetes and club fundraisers.

Not to be confused with:

Could be confused with Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) but this has star-shaped white flowers rather than bells.



Milkmaids flowers
Photo: O. Gooding





English Ivy
- *Hedera helix*

Photo: S Meacher



Blackberry*
- *Rubus fruticosus*



Photo: S Meacher

Photo: D Blair

Blackberry*

- *Rubus fruticosus*



Common Name: Blackberry

Scientific Name: *Rubus fruticosus* (spp. agg.)

Origin: Native to Europe

Size: This scrambling shrub invades any neglected area, creating dense thickets and invading indigenous vegetation. The stems, or 'canes' grow rapidly in spring from a woody crown, extending up to 7 m long and bearing numerous prickles.

Foliage: The leaves have 3 – 5 leaflets and short prickles on the undersides of the veins and stalks.

Flowers: The white or pink flowers with 5 petals appear in spring and summer.

Fruit: The blackberry fruits start green then turn red and finally black as they ripen. Blackberries are actually clusters of small, round fruits with one seed in each containing up to 80 seeds per berry.

* **Declared Noxious Weed**

How it spreads

The sweet, juicy fruits are eaten by birds, mammals, including foxes, and humans and the seeds are spread in their droppings. It can also be spread by cuttings of roots or stems, or by canes which arch over and come in contact with the soil establishing a 'daughter' plant. Seeds and plant fragments can be spread in contaminated soil and hay and dumped garden waste.

Not to be confused with:

Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*) has smaller leaves, doesn't form thick, woody canes and has pink flowers and smaller fruit, red when ripe.



Native Raspberry fruit
Photo: M. Grey



English Ivy

- *Hedera helix*



Common Name: Ivy or English Ivy

Scientific Name: *Hedera helix*

Origin: Native to the Northern Hemisphere.

Size: Ivy grows with continuous, long-running, woody stems, climbing up banks, walls and other plants to over 30m. Rootlets are produced along the runners which help the plant cling to vertical surfaces.

Foliage: Leaf shape is variable. The young stems have leaves with three to four pointed lobes, usually dark green above and paler underneath but they can be variegated (left). The leaves of older, flowering shoots often have a rounder appearance. The plant forms a thick blanket of foliage, eventually smothering any vegetation it covers.



Flowers: The small greenish, inconspicuous flowers are in round clusters on mature, climbing stems

Fruit: The berry-like fruits are dull-blue to black.

How it spreads

The berries are eaten by birds and the seeds are dropped into gardens and bushland. The plant also reproduces vegetatively, with stems taking root and spreading from each node. Ivy spread can be caused by dumping of garden cuttings in bushland and on roadsides. Once established, growth is rapid.



Note: All parts of the plant are poisonous and the sap is an irritant.



Japanese Honeysuckle
- *Lonicera japonica*



Photo: E Campbell

Photo: S. Orscheg

Japanese Honeysuckle

- *Lonicera japonica*



Common Name: Japanese Honeysuckle

Scientific Name: *Lonicera japonica*

Origin: Native to East Asia.

Size: Japanese Honeysuckle will climb and scramble to 10m.

Foliage: Leaves are bright green and hairless except for hugging hairs along veins and margins. Stems tend to be purplish and hairy when young, becoming woody with flaky bark when mature.

Flowers: The sweet-scented, white or creamy-yellow coloured trumpet-shaped flowers are in pairs near the branch tips.

Fruit: The fruit is a poisonous shiny black berry.

How it spreads

Birds eat the berries and spread the seeds in their droppings. Stems root down where they touch the ground (layering) and roots make new shoots (suckers). This plant is also often in garden waste and soil dumped on bushland and roadsides.



Common Name:

Scientific Name:

Origin:

Size:

Foliage:

Flowers:

Fruit:

How it spreads

Not to be confused with:

