



Our country, Our future.

Multifaceted approach Halting Cats Claw Creeper in the Boyne Valley



Cats Claw Creeper (Macfadyena unguis-cati) is an introduced vine that smothers native vegetation.

Although many landholders are concerned about the creeper's impacts, controlling this Weed of National Significance is time-consuming and costly.

To help control it, five landholders have participated in a Cats Claw Creeper control program since 2013 with the support of Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) and Capricornia Catchments through funding from the Queensland Government's Regional Natural Resource Management Investment Program.

To encourage further participation, Capricornia Catchments developed a demonstration site at Nagoorin Bridge Waterhole in March 2014. The site is a swimming hole popular with many residents from Boyne Valley, Gladstone and Calliope, and easily visible to passing traffic.

Capricornia Catchments Project Officer Lisa Del Riccio said many landholders believe that Cats Claw Creeper infestations are too hard to control. "The demonstration site challenges this view," she said. "The visual effect of dead Cats Claw Creeper hanging out of trees will hopefully inspire others to treat infestations on their properties. By sharing the results with landholders, we aim to encourage time-efficient and cost-effective treatment methods."

For the trials, three areas with similar creeper density and growth habits were marked out. Each received a different control method.

1. Cut vine and apply herbicide in a concentration of 83ml per litre of water to the stump.
2. Cut vine and apply herbicide in a ratio of 1:1 water to the stump.
3. Cut vine at ground level leaving a bare collar around tree and apply no herbicide.

The results are definitive. Stumps that were not treated with herbicide have vigorous regrowth, whereas the two areas treated with herbicide have shown no regrowth at all, with no discernible difference between the two application rates.

"Biological control is another part of our Cats Claw Creeper management program, and many people in the Boyne Valley believe it's our best option," said Lisa.

"Jewel beetles, *Hylaeogena jureceki*, have been released at several sites and they have survived and dispersed at all but one site over the past two years."

Ubobo landholder Monica Ehret agrees that biological control is crucial to controlling the creeper. "Without biological control we will lose the river banks to Cats Claw Creeper as physical control is impossible," she said. However, she has hope. "Beetles released at Cave Creek show signs of multiplying. There are breeding discs and leaves eaten. As landholders we are positive they have established a colony."



Volunteers work alongside Capricornia Catchments and Gladstone Regional Council to establish a beetle breeding facility that will ensure they have enough beetles for biocontrolling Cats Claw Creeper in the Boyne Valley.



Conservation Volunteers Australia and Gidarjil Land and Sea Rangers helped set up the demonstration site at Nagoorin Bridge Waterhole so they could gain experience in controlling Cats Claw Creeper effectively.