BLUEBELL CREEPER (Sollya)

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PROJECT TEAM
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Government of South Australia

Australian Government

What's the problem?

Bluebell creeper *(Billardiera heterophylla)* is an extremely invasive weed in woodlands and forests. The climber smothers native plants by out-competing them for sunlight or strangling them with their twining stems. Bluebell creeper also contains toxins that can irritate the skin and cause nausea.

It is native to Western Australia and has been widely planted in gardens outside its natural range. It is now an environmental weed in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT.

What does it look like?

Bluebell creeper is a twisting, evergreen shrub or climber growing to a height of 3–5 m. The leaf is shiny, oval or lance shaped, 5–7 cm long.

Flowers form small clusters of mainly blue, sometimes pink or white, bell-shaped flowers. Flowers have 5 petals and are approximately 1 cm in size. Plants flower from spring to summer.

Small fleshy fruit are oval shaped and up to 2 cm long. They begin green and ripen to blue-purple in summer and autumn. Each fruit contains more than 50 seeds. Roots are wide spreading and shallow.

The creeper tolerates partial shade and full sun. It can also survive extended dry periods. Seeds are dispersed by birds and possibly possums and ants.

How can you control them?

- Pull up or dig out seedlings and saplings.
- Cut or scrape the stem and swab with herbicide.
- Spray leaves with a broad-leaf or non-selective herbicide.
- Contact Rory Wiadrowski or Veronica Bates by phone 8553 4300 for more information or help.

Where are they on Kangaroo Island?

Bluebell creeper is spreading from the intersections of:

- Branch Creek Road, Margaries Road and Playford Highway
- Timber Creek Road and Playford Highway
- Berrymans Road and Colemans Road
- Franks Road and Hog Bay Road.

It is also spreading in the townships of Parndana and Vivonne Bay.

Spread the word not the weed!

A joint initiative of the Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board and the Department for Environment and Heritage.

Images below:
1. Blue bluebell creeper flowers *Billardiera heterophylla* (previously *Sollya heterophylla*). *Image: KI NRM Board.* 2. Pink bluebell creeper flowers. *Image: C. Wilson.* 3. Bluebell creeper fruits. *Image: C. Wilson* 4. Bluebell creeper smothering native bushland. *Image: KI NRM Board.*