

## CAT'S-CLAW CREEPER AND ITS CONTROL

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*Abstract.* Cat's-claw creeper, *Macfadyena unguis-cati* (L.) A. Gentry (Bignoniaceae), is an ornamental woody tropical American vine. It propagates readily by layering but also sets many wind-borne seeds which germinate freely in moist leaf litter.

Following its introduction as an ornamental, cat's-claw creeper has become widely naturalised in coastal and subcoastal Queensland and New South Wales wherever soil moisture, nutrients and temperature permit. Vigorous growth of stolons is followed by production of many root tubers and multiple vines which climb any support by claw-like leaf tendrils. The vine proliferates in the canopy of vine scrubs, rain forests and similar ecosystems, smothering trees and causing their collapse.

Control by hand is tedious, ineffective and highly disturbing since all stolons, seedlings and possibly tubers must be removed from the ground. The ability of the root tubers to regenerate after physical control is being examined.

The soft-wooded vines are easy to cut and the plant is susceptible to glyphosate. An effective control program starts with cutting vines 1 m above ground before flowering, followed by spraying the cut lower ends with 3% glyphosate. This kills the vines in the tree canopy and kills back vines between the cut and the ground. Vines and seedlings on the ground are killed by spraying with 3% glyphosate.

Initial (three month) results from a trial comparing glyphosate, triclopyr, clopyralid and metsulfuron-methyl suggest that the first two are effective for both cut vines and ground spraying, the third for cut vines only, and the last has little effect against either vines or leafy material on the ground. Glyphosate appears to be the most effective of the four herbicides.