

Seen this plant? Leaf cactus

Pereskia aculeata



How does this weed affect us?

Introduced into Australia in the 1920s as a garden ornamental, and first recognised as naturalised in the suburb of Sherwood, Brisbane, Leaf cactus is a potential threat to eucalypt communities in subtropical northern Australia. The plant has a tendency to form large impenetrable clumps, and its extreme thorniness makes control of large infestations difficult.

Any new outbreaks should be reported immediately to your local council weeds officer.

Do not try to control Leaf cactus without their expert assistance. Control effort that is poorly performed or not followed up can actually help spread the weed and worsen the problem.

Seen it? Call:

NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline 1800 680 244 or **Rous County Council 02 6623 3800**

Help protect our land, plants and wildlife.

For control and biosecurity information visit NSW WeedWise:
weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds/leafcactus





Where are we likely to find it?

Leaf cactus is native to the West Indies, Venezuela, Guyana, Brazil and Argentina. Elsewhere in the tropics, the plant has either been cultivated or has escaped.

It was recorded in 1989 as being localised frequently on the north coast of NSW, growing on a river bank among native vegetation. Another occurrence in 1993, now removed by a bush regeneration team, was recorded at Bar Island on the central coast of NSW.

What does it look like?

- Perennial, spiky, climbing shrub that attaches to trees in a vine-like manner up to 12m high.
- Long, slender spines in groups along the trunk and short recurved spikes in pairs on branches.
- Unusually-shaped small yellow to orange edible fruits 25-45mm in diameter, which are popular with birds. Fruit contains a single black seed up to 5mm in diameter.
- Scented flowers, white or pale yellow, sometimes aging to pink, 20-55mm in diameter.
- Leaves are waxy, slightly succulent and edible, 45-110mm long by 15-50mm broad.

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