



1. Habit growing in turf. 2. Leaves with four leaflets. 3. Creeping stem with roots at the joints. 4. Pinto peanut being cultivated as a ground cover.



Pinto peanut (*Arachis pintoi*)

Introduced

Not Declared

Pinto peanut is a long-lived creeping plant from Brazil that is beginning to become established as a weed of lawns and parks in Queensland. This plant, which is also known as perennial peanut or forage peanut, is cultivated for a variety of uses (e.g. as a pasture plant, as a ground cover in orchards, or as a garden ornamental).

Distribution

This plant has recently become naturalised in a few sites in south-eastern and northern Queensland. It was first recorded in 2003, growing on an organic farm in the Daintree area in far northern Queensland. Then, in 2007, it was reported spreading from garden beds across a nature strip near Nambour. Shortly after this it was noted growing along footpaths at Samford Village and at St. Lucia. Further populations have since been reported in northern Queensland, including a large infestation growing on a sports field in the southern suburbs of Cairns.

Description

Pinto peanut is a long-lived, creeping plant that eventually forms a dense mat of vegetation on the soil surface. It is usually less than 20 cm tall, and its stems regularly produce roots at their joints. These stems are hairy and bear alternately arranged leaves that have four leaflets. A pair of large leafy bracts (up to 30 mm long) is also present at the base of each leaf. The leaflets (up to 4.5 cm long and 3.5 cm wide) are quite broad with entire margins and rounded tips. They have darker green and hairless upper surfaces, while their undersides are paler and slightly hairy.

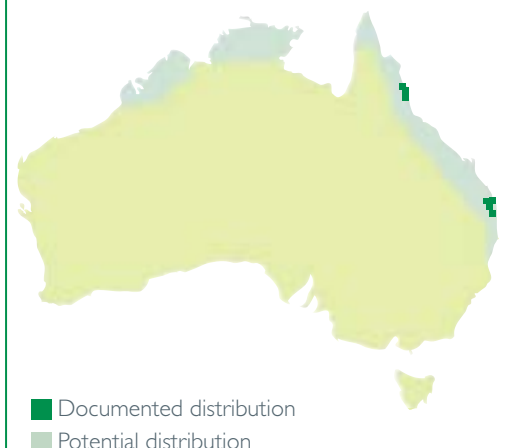
The bright yellow pea-shaped flowers (12-17 mm across) are usually borne on slender, upright, stalks. After flowering, the flower stalks elongate and grow down into the soil, penetrating the soil up to a depth of about 7 cm. The small fruit pods (10-14 mm long and 6-8 mm wide) then develop underground. These fruit have patterned surfaces and usually contain a single light brown seed, though they may occasionally have two seeds (8-11 mm long and 4-6 mm wide).

Quick Facts

- > A creeping plant that forms a dense mat of vegetation.
- > Its stems root at the joints and its leaves have four leaflets.
- > Its bright yellow flowers are usually borne on slender stalks.
- > Its fruit pods develop underground.

Habitat

Pinto peanut is a potential weed of parks, lawns, sports fields, footpaths, roadsides and disturbed sites in tropical and sub-tropical areas.





1. Close-up of bright yellow flower. 2. Infestation in a sports field in Cairns.

Reproduction and Dispersal

This species reproduces by seed and also vegetatively via its creeping stems (i.e. stolons and rhizomes). Plants spread laterally over time and may eventually form large colonies. Stem segments may be detached and spread by mowers and slashers, while seeds may be dispersed in soil.

Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Pinto peanut competes well with turfgrasses and has the potential to become a serious weed of mown areas, particularly parks and sports fields in warmer areas. The fact that its seeds develop well under the ground surface means that they avoid being mown and are almost impossible to kill.

Control Methods

Smaller plants can be removed manually, but every effort should be made to ensure that all of the root system remains intact during removal. While no chemicals are currently registered for the control of Pinto Peanut in Australia, it is known that this species is susceptible to metsulfuron-methyl and glufosinate but tolerant of 2,4-D and sethoxydim.

Within Queensland, the use of metsulfuron-methyl is permitted for the spot spraying of environmental weeds such as Pinto peanut in non-crop situations via off-label permit 11463 (<http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER11463.PDF>). Before applying this method of control within other state boundaries, it is recommended that all operators consult any relevant permits or government legislation.

Follow-up may be required in areas where the plant is well-established, as it may re-grow in following seasons from a store of underground seeds.

Look a-likes

Pinto peanut is relatively similar to the edible Peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*), but is much shorter in stature. Pinto peanut is also a long-lived plant with creeping stems that regularly produce roots at their joints, while Peanut is a short-lived plant with upright or straggling stems.



Top. Habit of a Peanut plant.

Bottom. Upright stems and leaves.

The control methods referred to in Weed Watch™ should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Technigro does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

This information has been developed with the assistance of Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2011

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Post: PO Box 2020, Nerang BC, QLD, 4211

T: 1800 678 611 www.technigro.com.au