



1. Habit in fruit. 2. Close-up of inconspicuous white flowers. 3. Clusters of immature fruit. 4. Mature fruit splitting open to release seeds.



Slenderleaf Bundleflower (*Desmanthus leptophyllus*)

Introduced

Not Declared

Slenderleaf Bundleflower is small shrub native to Central and South America that has been cultivated as a pasture legume in northern Australia. It is beginning to spread from cultivation and has been recorded at a few locations in eastern Queensland in the last five years.

Distribution

This species is often planted in improved permanent pastures in northern Australia. However, it was first recorded as naturalised in 2008, when a population of about 50 individuals was reported growing along a roadside near Giru (south of Townsville). Then in June 2011, a small population was found growing along Wolston Road in Sumner in western Brisbane.

Description

Slenderleaf Bundleflower is an upright shrub growing up to 3 m in height, but is usually only 1-2 m tall. The base of the plant is woody with numerous long branched stems. Younger stems are green and mostly hairless, while older stems turn shiny red or brown in colour. The leaves are twice compound (i.e. bipinnate) and are alternately arranged along the stems. These leaves are relatively small (4-11 cm long) with 4-8 pairs of small branches. Each of these leaf branches bears 16-36 pairs of tiny leaflets (2-6 mm long and 0.5-1.0 mm wide).

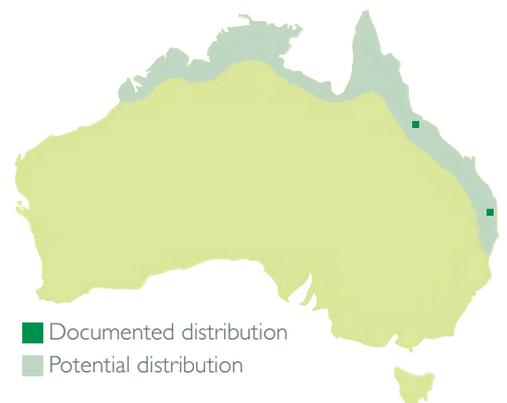
The flowers are borne in small dense clusters that appear to be a single flower at first glance. These whitish clusters (5-9 mm long) each contain 5-12 flowers and are borne singly at the end of short branches in the upper leaf forks. The lowermost flowers in a cluster are male or sterile, while the uppermost flowers have both male and female parts. These flowers don't have any obvious petals and are fluffy in appearance, due to the numerous white or cream coloured stamens. The flattened fruit pods are produced in clusters at the end of the short flowering branches, each cluster having 1-9 pods. These elongated pods (2-9 cm long and 2.5-4 mm wide) turn from green to reddish-brown at maturity and split open from both sides to release several hard seeds (2-3 mm across). Flowering and fruiting occurs mainly during autumn, but has also been recorded in spring.

Quick Facts

- > Upright much-branched shrubby plant usually growing 1-2 m tall
- > Hairless stems that usually turn shiny red-brown in colour
- > Compound leaves with 4-8 pairs of branchlets bearing numerous tiny leaflets
- > White or cream coloured flowers without any obvious petals
- > Elongated and flattened pods borne in small clusters

Habitat

Within its natural range this species occurs in coastal thickets, along roadsides, and in marshes at altitudes from sea level to 1,500 m. In Australia it is generally found growing along roadsides or in pastures, while it has been recorded growing on the edges of fallow fields in Florida.





1. Population growing on a roadside in Brisbane. 2. Glossy red stems, leaves and flowers.

Reproduction and Dispersal

This species generally reproduces by seed, and is most likely to be spread as a contaminant of agricultural produce or in hay. The small seeds have a hard coat and studies have found that the majority of them pass through sheep intact. Hence they may also be distributed by livestock that eat the fruit pods.

Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Slenderleaf Bundleflower has the potential to become a weed of roadsides, disturbed sites, waste areas, pastures, native grasslands, and open woodlands in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Australia. It is relatively drought-resistant and could become established in sub-coastal as well as coastal regions.

Control Methods

Individual plants or small infestations can be removed manually, taking care to ensure that the crown is removed. When larger infestations are present, or where plants are too difficult to remove using tools, the use of herbicides may be necessary. This species is known to be susceptible to Access herbicide (i.e. picloram plus triclopyr). However, no herbicides are currently registered for the control of this species in Queensland.

The control of environmental weeds, such as Slenderleaf Bundleflower, is currently allowed in Queensland via off-label permit 11463 (<http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER11463.PDF>). Under this permit, Access and certain other herbicides can be used to control Slenderleaf Bundleflower and other woody weeds in non-crop areas. Spot spray, cut and paint, and basal bark application methods can be used depending on the product and the circumstances.

Please read this permit carefully and refer to it for the appropriate products and rates to use. Unless otherwise stated in this permit, the use of any product must be in accordance with the instructions on its label. Within other state boundaries, it is recommended that all managers consult any relevant permits or government legislation applicable to their region.

Look a-likes

Slenderleaf Bundleflower is very similar to Slender Mimosa (*Desmanthus pernambucanus*), which is also naturalised in Australia. However, Slender Mimosa has hairy stems and its leaves have only 2-4 pairs of branches.



Top. Habit of Slender Mimosa.

Bottom. Close-up of green stems and leaves with only four pairs of branchlets.

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 The IVM Group and Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2014

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