



CLIENT HANDOUT • WEEDING

Safe Weed Removal

Pull the weed, not your back. How to get weeds out without spreading them, hurting yourself or pulling up the good plants by mistake. Plus when to call in help.

Pick the right move for the weed

Hand-pull

For seedlings and soft weeds. Best after rain, when the soil is soft. Pull slowly from the base so the roots come too. Shake off the soil, not the seeds.

Crowning

For asparagus weeds and clumps. The **crown** is the knobbly base where stems meet roots. Cut the stems back, slice around the crown just under the soil, then lever it out. Leave a bit behind and it grows back.

Dig out

For woody seedlings, crofton weed and blackberry. Get the whole root (blackberry roots go down at least 45 cm). Fill the hole and cover the bare soil, ideally with new plants, so fresh seedlings don't move in.

Cut and leave (vines)

Cut climbing stems near the ground, leave a gap, and let the top part die off up in the tree. **Don't drag vines out of trees.** You hurt the tree and scatter seeds and tubers (the vine's underground "potatoes").

Rake and roll

For trad and other weeds that grow as a mat. Rake the mat into a roll like a carpet, bag every scrap, and come back each month for regrowth.

Smother

Covering trad with plastic for 2–6 weeks in warm weather helps. Mulch can stop new seedlings, but it won't kill weeds that are already growing.

A word on weedkillers

Some tough weeds (woody shrubs, cat's claw, Madeira vine) usually need a registered weedkiller (herbicide) painted onto a fresh cut or scrape. This is called **cut-and-paint** or **scrape-and-paint**. Use it **exactly as the label or APVMA permit says**. Never spray near creeks, drains or bushland edges, or on windy days. In NSW, anyone using pesticides for work, gardeners included, must have the required training (AQF3 for working without supervision) and keep records. This handout doesn't give product or dose advice.

Stay safe

- ✓ **Gloves, long sleeves and eye protection** for prickly, sappy or poisonous plants. Wash up afterwards.
- ✓ **Milky sap:** keep moth vine sap off your skin and out of your eyes.
- ✓ **Itchy rash:** trad can cause bad skin allergies in dogs, and now and then in people.
- ✓ **Poisonous weeds** include privet fruit, cassia (people, dogs, livestock), lantana, purple morning glory, moth vine and mother-of-millions (people and pets). Keep kids and pets away, and bag the waste.
- ✓ **Prickles:** blackberry and ground asparagus need thick gloves and long sleeves.
- ✓ **Lift safely:** bend your knees, use a mattock or garden fork for big roots, and don't fill bags heavier than you can carry.
- ✓ **Look before you cut:** check for birds' nests, and watch for snakes, spiders and wasps in thick tangles.



Madeira vine: never pull it down. Every tuber can grow a new plant - Photo: Will Cornwell, CC BY (iNaturalist)

Did you know?

Some of our best native plants get pulled by mistake: scurvy weed, native raspberry, wonga vine and sweet sarsaparilla, to name a few. Not sure? Leave it and check first. My *Natives Often Mistaken for Weeds* sheet can help.

Bin it right

Which bin?

-  **Green bin** Leaves, stems and soft growth with **no** seeds, fruit, tubers or bulbs. Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai take weeds in the green bin. Check with your own council.
-  **Bag it, then red bin** Seed heads, berries, pods, tubers, bulbs, crowns, and anything that regrows from small bits: trad, Madeira vine, cat's claw, Singapore daisy, asparagus weeds, mother-of-millions.
-  **Never** Home compost, over the back fence, into bushland, or in the recycling. Don't burn it either: backyard burning isn't allowed across most of Sydney.

Tip: bridal creeper's underground stems (rhizomes) die if the tied-up bag sits in the sun for 2–3 months.

Golden rules

- 1 Seeds first.** Take off flowers, pods and fruit before anything else.
- 2 Start with the good bits.** Begin where the natives are healthiest and work towards the worst patch.
- 3 A little at a time.** Cover bare ground straight away, ideally with new plants.
- 4 Leave shelter for small birds.** Remove thick weedy shrubs in stages while natives grow up to take their place.
- 5 Come back every month** for the first year. Seeds in the soil and leftover tubers keep popping up.
- 6 Clean your boots and tools** before moving to another part of the garden.

Report it

Found climbing asparagus (*Asparagus africanus*) or Ming asparagus fern? Greater Sydney is trying to wipe these out, so tell your council's weeds officer. Think you've found a banned plant ("prohibited matter")? Call NSW DPI on **1800 680 244**.

Your weeding kit

- ☐ Thick gloves ☐ Eye protection ☐ Secateurs ☐ Small pruning saw
- ☐ Old knife or narrow trowel (for crowning) ☐ Garden fork or mattock ☐ Strong bags you can tie off ☐ Tarp (to catch tubers and seeds) ☐ Kneeling pad ☐ Water and a hat

Time to call in a pro

- ✓ Vines up in a tree, or tangles you can't see into
- ✓ Any tree over your council's size limit: you'll need a permit and usually an arborist (see my tree sheet)
- ✓ Big infestations, steep slopes or ground that could wash away
- ✓ Weeds next to bushland, creeks or drains
- ✓ Anything that needs weedkiller
- ✓ Priority weeds such as cat's claw, Madeira vine or ground asparagus
- ✓ Poisonous or itchy weeds, if you have small kids, pets or sensitive skin

What I do, and don't

I do: weed removal in stages with follow-up visits, crowning and digging, careful cut-and-leave vine work at ground level, proper disposal, and replanting so the weeds don't come back.

I don't: remove or heavily prune trees over council size limits without the right permit, or climb trees. For tree work I'll refer you to a qualified consulting arborist (AQF Level 5) or tree contractor.

✓ Do this

- Pull weeds after rain
- Bag seeds, berries and tubers
- Cut vines at the base

✗ Not that

- Drag vines out of trees
- Compost seeds or tubers
- Dump clippings in the bush

Weeds winning?

Hand them over. I'll quote on weeding, clean-ups and replanting. Prefer regular help? Ask about monthly or quarterly care.

Get in touch for a quote: 0481 106 188

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