



Image: Cat's claw creeper infestation of riparian vegetation along Coochin Creek.

# Invasive species impacting Coochin Creek

During routine inspections for Sunshine Coast Council's Biosecurity Surveillance Program, officers identified infestations of cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) and Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*) impacting riparian areas of Coochin Creek. These species are vigorous climbers that smother trees, shrubs and understorey species—altering the structures of riparian habitats and compromising soil stability.

Council's Pest and Vector team are assisting local property owners to better understand invasive plant identification and control. A range of manual and biological control tools are being provided to assist landholders.

### About the project

- Cat's claw creeper and Dutchman's pipe are impacting areas of Coochin Creek riparian vegetation.
- Sunshine Coast Council is working with landholders to control these invasive species to protect native vegetation and riparian habitats.
- This project is contributing to enhancing the riparian areas in one of Council's major green spaces – the 'Regional Inter-urban Break'.

Restoring the Coochin Creek ecological linkage.



A Sunshine Coast Council project.

Cat's claw creeper and Dutchman's pipe smother native vegetation and impact riparian vegetation.

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Catchment:	Pumicestone Passage
Timing:	2021

Categories
Community and Education
Erosion and Sediment Control
Land Management
Litter Clean up
Revegetation
Science and Research
Stormwater
Wastewater
Water Sensitive Urban Design

## Why this project is important

Coochin Creek, in the northern Pumicestone Passage Catchment, provides an important link between the mangrove habitats of the Pumicestone Passage in the east and the eucalypt woodland habitats of the Pumicestone escarpment in the west.

Invasive vine species can grow quickly and smother the tallest of native trees. They are vigorous climbers that smother trees, shrubs and understorey species. Loss of native species alters the structures of riparian habitats and compromises soil stability.

Council is working with local landholders to control these invasive species and maintain and enhance the riparian habitats.

This project is contributing to enhancing the riparian areas in one of council's major green spaces – the Regional Inter-urban Break (RIUB). The RIUB is a significant green space that both divides and connects the Moreton and Sunshine Coast regions. The RIUB is made up of a diverse mix of landscape types and characters and supports diverse activities, all of which contribute to the region.



## Objectives

- Liberate large eucalypts and other canopy species from Strangulation by target species.
- Limit spread of target species by preventing seed production.
- Reduce density and extent of infestation within understorey.
- Liberate and encourage desirable understorey species.
- Selective targeting of exotic woody weeds to encourage natural regeneration of desirable species.

## Outcomes

- Control and eradication of cat's claw creeper and Dutchman's pipe through the application of a range of control methods including biocontrol.
- Improved condition of an important riparian corridor within the Pumicestone Passage.
- Increased capacity of landholders in managing invasive species on their property through effective control methods.