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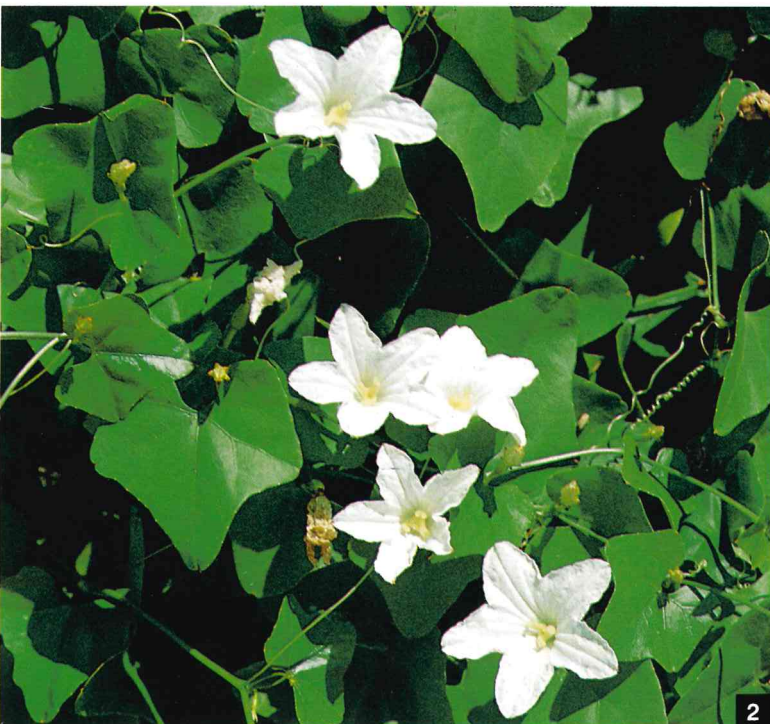
IVY GOURD



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1. Mature plant 2. Flowers 3. Infestation

IVY GOURD

What you should know about ivy gourd

Ivy gourd (*Coccinia grandis*) is a member of the curcubit (cucumber) plant family

It is a tropical plant, native to central Africa, India and Asia. In south-east Asia it is a common weed. It has spread to Australia, as well as Texas, Hawaii, the Caribbean and the Philippines. Small infestations have been found in Broome, South Hedland, Arnhem Land and Queensland.

Ivy gourd may have originally been introduced for food because its young fruit and shoot tips are sometimes used as a vegetable in Asian cookery.

Ivy gourd is a declared plant in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. It may not be introduced and any landholders with this plant on their properties must destroy it.

Why ivy gourd matters to you

Ivy gourd is an aggressive climbing plant that can quickly spread over trees and shrubs, smothering them. It could become a damaging

environmental weed in the tropics and a weed problem in irrigated plantation crops.

What you should look for

- **Habit:** Ivy gourd is an aggressive climbing vine. In mild climates it remains green throughout the year but dies back in drier climates.
- **Leaves:** Variable, similar to a cucumber, varying from heart to pentagon shaped. They grow up to 10 cm in width and length.
- **Flowers:** large and white about 4 cm across. Male and female flowers grow on separate plants. They usually grow singly with long tubular petals each with six lobes. Male flowers have long (6 mm) filamentous stamens while female flowers have a two-lobed stigma.

- The **fruit** is an oval hairless gourd, looking like a small gherkin. When mature they are bright red (coccinia means red) and from 25 to 60 mm long by 15 to 35 mm in diameter.
 - Numerous pale flattened **seeds** 6-7 mm long are contained in the fruit.
 - **Tendrils** are long and simple. They wrap around the host.
 - The **roots and stems** are succulent; capable of storing water through the dry season. Rootstock can reach 5 cm diameter with occasional adventitious roots forming where the stem runs along the ground.
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Why ivy gourd might succeed in WA

Ivy gourd is a perennial plant which spreads vegetatively or by seed. Individual plants are either male or female, so at least two plants (of different sexes) must be present for it to form viable seed. It appears to prefer sandy soil. It has become a weed by rampant growth in

Hawaii where it was introduced deliberately in the 1960s.

Computer predictions show that ivy gourd is climatically adapted to a large area of tropical and subtropical Australia from Broome to the NSW/Queensland border

What you can do about it

If you find a rampant vine in the north of the state, check it out and contact the APB.

Where to find out more

For further information on ivy gourd contact the Agriculture Protection Board, Baron-Hay Court, South Perth 6151. Telephone (09) 368 3472 or the nearest country office of the APB or the Department of Agriculture.
