

**Bushland-friendly gardens
goal:
Remove all mature (seeding) bitou
from Pacific Palms backyards
by 2020!**

BITOU BUSH

Bitou bush is threatening the health of our precious natural ecosystems in Pacific Palms. A lot of work has already been done to remove it - can we eradicate this invader by 2020? We think there's a chance! Read on to find out how.



Bitou bush in Pacific Palms

Bitou bush originated in South Africa, and was extensively spread in NSW in the 1940s-60s for stabilisation after sand mining. It spread rapidly and in 1999 was listed as a key threat to biodiversity in NSW, and a Weed of National Significance.

In Pacific Palms, Council is working closely with volunteers, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and private landholders on a number of fronts. There has been significant investment over the last 15 years.

Two biological controls are being used. Where possible the plant is being hand removed, and where there is extensive growth it is being sprayed with herbicide, including participation in the state-wide collaborative aerial spraying program.

As a result, the headland and dunes at Boomerang Beach are now in very good condition, while Elizabeth Beach and Blueys Beach are improving after only a couple of years of focussed effort there.

What am I required to do?

Let's work together to meet our 2020 goal! Act now to remove mature (seeding) bitou and bitou X boneseed plants. We will be reinspecting properties where bitou has been found.

Under the Biosecurity Act (2015), you are required to control bitou bush on your property. Please contact us if you require any assistance to discuss your options.

We're here to help!

For more information about Pacific Palms Backyard Bushcare and our target weeds, visit:
midcoast.nsw.gov.au/backyardbushcare

To discuss any aspect of bitou bush control on your place, please contact Council's weed officers on 6591 7222.

NSW WeedWise bitou bush information:
weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/16

LET'S GO BITOU-FREE !

**Turn over for a handy guide to get you
started on removing Bitou Bush from
your property...**

INVADER: Bitou Bush



Why is it a problem?

Bitou bush is highly invasive, especially on sandy soil. It crowds out native vegetation through fast growth and chemical inhibitors. The result is bushland and dunes that can't support as many birds, insects, and other animals; less stable sand dunes; and reduced public amenity.

What does it look like?

From NSW WeedWise: Bitou bush is a spreading woody shrub with succulent stems, often prostrate on the ground. It is typically 1-2m tall and 2-6m wide.

Its leaves are bright green, succulent, oval in shape with a tapering base and irregular teeth along the edge, 3-8 cm long. Young growth is typically covered by a cottony down.

Mature plants produce lots of bright yellow daisy-like flowers with 11-13 'petals'. Fruits are green, becoming black when ripe and contain only a single seed. The seeds are egg-shaped, 5-7 mm long, fleshy externally with an internal hard bone-like shell which is dark brown to black when dry.

In Pacific Palms some plants have also crossed with close relation Boneseed, and have a more upright habit and flowers with fewer petals.

How does it spread?

Bitou mostly spreads by seed after being eaten by birds and other animals. Plants produce a huge quantity of seed, with an estimated 2-4 year viability in the soil.

How to control it

In the context of your backyard, the most practical way to control bitou will be to pull out seedlings and small plants. For larger plants, especially where soil disturbance is undesired, herbicide can be used to 'cut and paint' the stem (see below). This is best done before seed set (June-September). To be thorough, any seeds should be placed in a bag in your red bin.

Instructions for 'cut and paint':

- Cut the stem with loppers or saw as close to the ground as possible.
- Wearing gloves, apply neat glyphosate-based herbicide to the cut stump within 10 seconds. It is only necessary to apply to the outer rim (cambium)

Tip: old hair dye bottles or small tomato sauce squeeze bottles work well to apply the herbicide only where it's needed.

