



Hiptage Vine



What is it

Hiptage (*Hiptage benghalensis*) is a woody vine or dense, scrambling shrub native to Asia. Initially introduced as an ornamental plant, it has become highly invasive in many tropical and subtropical regions. In the Wet Tropics it is restricted to the Mossman area.

Why is it a problem

Hiptage poses a serious threat to ecosystems. It smothers native vegetation, forming dense thickets that block sunlight and prevent regeneration. Its weight can cause trees to collapse, and it invades riparian areas, threatening biodiversity and waterway health. Hiptage produces windborne seeds which can spread long distances into undisturbed forests.

Characteristics

Hiptage can grow as a shrub in open areas or as a vine in rainforests, reaching to the top of the canopy. It has opposite, elliptical leaves (9–19 cm long) that are shiny on top. Its fragrant flowers are white with pink tinges and yellow markings. The seed has three helicopter like wings, aiding wind dispersal. The seeds also float so they can be spread by water.

BIOSECURITY RISKS



How to spot it on your property

Look for twisting stems with whitish raised spots, shiny elliptical leaves, and clusters of fragrant flowers which usually occur in the dry season. The vine rapidly climbs trees and structures, forming dense vine towers. Its three-winged seed is distinctive and pale brown when mature.

One of the best ways to identify the vine is to blaze the bark.

Using secateurs, gently blaze the bark to expose the inner layers of the vine's stem. The outer margins will reveal a thin green layer that gradually transitions into a thicker white layer. The inner margins will present a clear light brown colour. No sap should be visible after the bark has been blazed.

What to do about it

- **PHYSICAL REMOVAL:** Hand-pull recently germinated seedlings ensuring all roots and fragments are removed.
- **CHEMICAL CONTROL:** Once seedlings are established, use cut and paint techniques with herbicide (cut stems at about waist height with secateurs or loppers and immediately paint them with herbicide). Larger plants will require the cut-stump technique (cutting the plant near the ground and then applying herbicide to the exposed stump). No herbicide is currently registered for control of Hiptage in Queensland. However, an off-label use permit (Permit No. PER11463 <https://permits.apvma.gov.au/per11463.pdf>) allows use of various herbicides for control of environmental weeds in non agricultural areas, bushland, forests, wetlands, and coastal and adjacent areas. Follow up control may be required.
- **PREVENTION:** Avoid planting Hiptage and report infestations to local authorities.
- Report any sightings of Hiptage to local authorities to help prevent its spread.
- Do not move seeds, plant material, or soil that may contain Hiptage remnants. Always dispose of them in a sealed bag or controlled waste system to prevent further dispersal.

Where to find out more

RESOURCES: Douglas Shire Council Biosecurity Management Plan - https://douglas.qld.gov.au/download/natural_resource_management/DSBP-2022-2026_version-1.4_PRINT.pdf



BIOSECURITY OBLIGATIONS AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

Hiptage is a locally declared plant under Douglas Shire Council Local Laws. It is an offence under Local Law to distribute or propagate. Penalties apply.

GENERAL BIOSECURITY OBLIGATION:

The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with Hiptage under their control.