

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?



NSW Agriculture

Weed Alert

Glory Lily

(Flame Lily)

Gloriosa superba



Poisonous to humans, stock

■ WORLD STATUS

A native of Africa and Asia, glory lilies are grown commercially for a chemical compound, colchicine. In parts of India, they are considered threatened due to over-harvesting by the pharmaceutical trade.

They are widely-cultivated as garden plants around the world, including in Australia.

Glory lily has subsequently become naturalised along parts of the Australian coast from north of Sydney to south-east Queensland.



An open capsule showing the lily seed head.

■ THE PROBLEM

All parts of the glory lily are highly-toxic if eaten and the weed has been responsible for the poisoning of both humans and livestock. The alkaloid present in the plant causes multiple physiological effects and can even cause death. The rhizomes are particularly toxic, even after cooking. In Australia, glory lily can form dense understorey carpets in dune systems along the coast, competing strongly with native flora.

Glory lily also compromises bitou bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *rotundata*) control programs because, once the bitou bush is removed, glory lily can form a dense understorey. Stem densities of at least 70 stems per square metre are not uncommon on removal of overstorey.

■ IDENTIFICATION

Glory lily is a perennial herb with climbing stems up to 4 m long.

■ **Leaves** are shiny, green and hairless with 10–20 mm long tendrils at the tips which curl around supporting plants.

■ **Flowers** are 45–70 mm wide, yellow, orange and red, borne singly on spreading stalks which arise in leaf forks. Flowers appear to be upside down with the petals pointing upwards, while 40–70 mm long stamens point downwards. Flowers grow from October–May. The seed pod is shaped like a rugby ball 40–100 mm long and 10–20 mm wide.

■ **Seeds** are initially orange to red before drying to 4–5 mm diameter brown balls. Top growth dies-off in winter before re-shooting in the spring.

Visit our website: www.agric.nsw.gov.au/weeds



NSW Agriculture

FOR MORE
INFORMATION:

Contact your local
council weeds officer
or district agronomist,
or telephone the
NSW Agriculture Hotline
on 1800 680 244.



The showy flower of the glory lily, (*Gloriosa superba*).

■ PROPAGATION

Glory lily produces large numbers of seeds and rhizomes. Unfortunately, one of the main methods of spread is by the dumping of garden refuse in bushland.

■ CONTROL

Dumping garden waste in bushland and allowing these garden plants to spread out of control in gardens close to natural bushland areas creates a major threat of further infestations. Effective management programs should aim at educating gardeners to use alternate species and also to safely dispose of garden refuse.

Andrew Storrie

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(Photographs: A. Storrie)

Watch out for and report glory lily (flame lily):

This weed is often cultivated as a garden plant. If you have seen this plant, report it to your Council Weeds Officer or NSW Agriculture.