

# Asparagus plumosus

## COMMON NAME

asparagus fern

## SYNONYMS

*Asparagus setaceus*

## FAMILY

Asparagaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Asparagus plumosus* Baker

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes - Monocots

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. Forest margins, understorey, shrublands; waste areas, abandoned gardens - often appearing in hedgerows.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender, scrambling or climbing perennial. Rootstock a cluster of fleshy tubers, often massive compared with the delicate size of the aerial stems and foliage. Stems to 3.8 m tall, almost woody below, green and much-branched above. Branches widely spreading with branchlets fern-like and cladodes all lying in one plane. Cladodes needle-like, extremely fine, 3-7 mm long, 7-20 at each node. Small white flowers are held at the end of the stems in groups of up to 4. Small (6mm diam) round dark purple-black berries containing 1-3 black seeds.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Slender, scrambling or climbing plant as with climbing asparagus. Note 7-20 cladodes (leaf-like) projections from each node of the main stem, are very fine and needle-like and distinguish this species.

## FLOWERING

November, December

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Produces small black globose seeds; 1-3 seeds per berry, viability unknown. Probably dispersed by birds.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1974

## ORIGIN

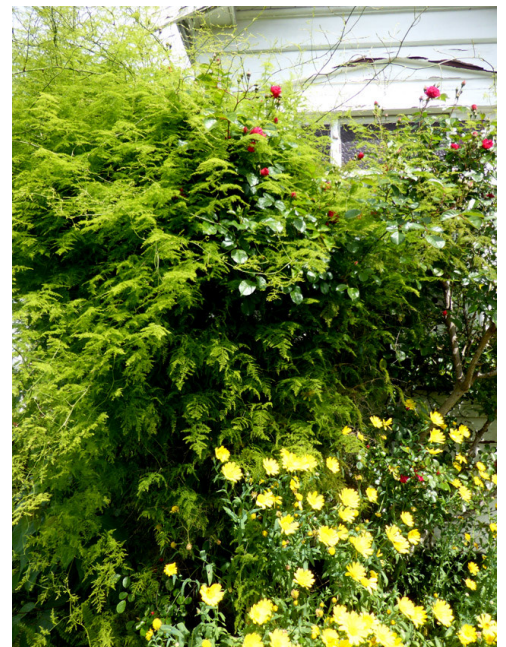
Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental



Tubers of 3.8m-tall vine, Wanganui.  
Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Climbing through garden shrubs, Liverpool St, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 28/10/2017, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## TOLERANCES

Will tolerate deep shade.

## ETYMOLOGY

**asparagus:** An old Greek name for this plant possibly derived from a- (an intensifier) and sparasso 'to tear', referring to the prickles of some species

## NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

**This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord.** The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asparagus-plumosus/>