Agave

*Agave americana*

Also known as ‘Century plant’, this large native succulent of southern North America has been widely used as a garden ornamental. However, it has now become an invasive weed of bushland, roadsides and wastelands.

The large spiky leaves are a significant human safety problem in public areas. The stout spine at the end of the leaf can cause injury. The sap of the plant is also a skin irritant and can cause dermatitis.

The plant reproduces and spreads both by seed and by suckering. The plant is very hardy, tolerating a wide range of soil conditions and thriving in hard, dry country – as well as sand dunes. Invasive plant which can disrupt native flora communities and ecosystems.

**Description**

Agave grows as a solitary or clustering plant. It has long strap-like leaves, sometimes over 2m long, armed with sharp spikes along the edges and a stout spike at the very end of the leaf blade. The leaves are generally green, with some varieties having a prominent cream stripe or stripes along them. Flowers are mostly creamy-yellow, tubular and are borne in clusters along a very tall flower stalk. The plant has a strong underground tap root, from which small pup-plants bud off.

**Management**

Agave is a very problematic plant to deal with. Great care must be taken to avoid eye or skin damage from the sharp spikes. The stout spike on the end of the leaf can inflict very painful wounds, leaving severe swelling and joint pain. When attempting control, always wear protective clothing, safety goggles or glasses and gloves.

Small plants can be hand removed and large plants can be moved by machinery. Take care to dig out the tap root to prevent spread by suckering.

If you would like further information on control of weeds visit Queensland Government Website.