Dutchman’s pipe is an environmental weed that is widely promoted as an unusual, easily cultivated ornamental plant.

Dutchman’s pipe is a popular novelty in gardens and suburban backyards and has naturalised in several areas of Queensland. As an environmental weed, Dutchman’s pipe has a preference for moist, fertile soils making it a prime invader of rainforest habitat.

Dutchman’s pipe is similar to the natives Pararistolochia praevenosa and Aristolochia acuminata, which are natural food plants for a number of Australian butterflies.

Dutchman’s pipe however is a deadly alternative, with butterflies laying their eggs on its leaves, and then poisoning the larvae when they hatch and begin to feed. The survival of the rare Richmond birdwing butterfly (Ornithoptera richmondia) is threatened by this occurrence.

Dutchman’s pipe is an invasive plant which can disrupt native flora communities and ecosystems.

Description

Dutchman’s pipe is a fast-growing vine that can reach 3m in length.

The common name arose from the distinctive flowers that are shaped like a traditional Dutchman's pipe. These flowers are strikingly coloured reddish purple and marked with white and yellow.

Leaves are up to 75mm long, glossy green and heart-shaped, growing closely to form a dense mat of foliage. The woody stems are slender and twine tightly in coils around any supporting structure.

Management

Manual removal may be the only suitable method of control available for this weed. Small plants can be pulled or dug out, ensuring that the crown and the roots are removed.

Vigorous growth may be cut down using a brush hook or other such tool, preferably before seeds set. Trace vines to their main crown and cut with a knife well below this growing point, removing all parts of the plant from the soil.

If you would like further information on weeds look at the A–Z Listing of Weeds at Queensland Government Website.