

## Causing a stink: *Paederia foetida* found on mainland Australia

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**Summary** *Paederia foetida* (skunk or stink vine) was found in riparian vegetation near Liverpool (south western Sydney) in December 2015. It was later positively identified by the National Herbarium of NSW. Previously skunk vine has only been found in Australian territory on Christmas Island. The species is on the target list of weeds of concern to northern Australia as part of the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS). A native of southern and eastern Asia, skunk vine has invaded both Hawaii and four other continental USA states, becoming regionally problematic by invading a range of natural habitats. It has also invaded the Mascarene Island group in the Indian Ocean and New Caledonia in the Pacific.

Skunk vine adapts to a wide range of conditions. The leaves of this perennial vine emit a sulphurous

smell when injured. It is also a weed of sugarcane, in the nursery trade and is commonly found in lawns. It is spread by wind or birds, in landscaping material and garden waste, but is also spread intentionally by people, particularly as a traditional medicinal crop grown for its anti-inflammatory properties. The Liverpool infestation has been delimited at <0.5 ha and is undergoing eradication. The response to skunk vine demonstrates a number of key lessons, that is the importance of: identifying potential threats; regular routine surveillance in high risk areas to detect these threats early; positive taxonomic determination/s; professional networks in identifying the broader threat posed by species; and communicating these threats to others should they eventuate.