

**MM34/24 CONTROL OF SPANISH MOSS - Mayor, Councillor  
Trenton Brown****File Number:** MYR/07/10/20 - BP24/681

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It has been brought to my attention that the plant Spanish Moss is continuing to proliferate in a number of locations in the Ryde LGA. The plant is particularly noticeable in East Ryde, (on one side of the Field of Mars Reserve) and in Gladesville where it is common on both privately owned property and on Council's street trees. The plant has also been found in the Field of Mars which has an estimated 2000-2500 trees which contain a range of NSW vegetation communities.

Whilst not classified as a noxious weed, Spanish Moss is an epiphyte and uses host trees or plants to collect nutrients and moisture.

Spanish Moss is often grown as an ornamental plant in Sydney residential backyards, and is sometimes collected by small birds to use as a component of their nests. This is one way it can spread to tree canopies.

There are only two methods of removing Spanish Moss being herbicide or manual removal. The use of herbicide also affects the host tree, whilst manual removal is time consuming and requires physical labour. Manual removal runs the risk that areas "missed" could be respread by wildlife.

For Spanish Moss to detrimentally affect a tree, it must cover the tree and deprive the leaves of sunlight. This is unlikely, as often Spanish Moss reaches a point in its growth where it dies back or is affected when periods of drought occur.

Council staff do not consider the plant to be in plague proportions in the LGA, but it is noted that this plant spreads rapidly and should be contained before it reaches plague proportions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That:

- (a) Council investigate the removal of Spanish Moss from key locations in civic spaces including local parks, the Field of Mars and in streetscapes where its presence is reported, and report back to Council on the cost and resources that would be required to undertake this within the next 3 months.
- (b) Bush care groups be encouraged to manually remove Spanish Moss where it is identified in local areas that they maintain.

**MM34/24 (continued)**

- (c) Council undertake an education program through the design and distribution of a flyer outlining why Spanish Moss is a problem. The flyer to be distributed to areas where the plant has been reported and/or recently removed.

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:

**Councillor Trenton Brown**  
**Mayor**