

# BIO-HAZARD

## Cardiospermum halicacabum

*Cardiospermum halicacabum* (Heart-pea vine), originating from Tropical America, was introduced into South Africa as an ornamental plant. It has now become a widespread problem, especially in the eastern parts of the country. Within the KNP *C. halicacabum* has been found along the Crocodile, Levuvhu, Letaba, Mlondozi, Nwaswitsontso and Sabie rivers.

### Identification

**Description:** Herbaceous or slightly woody climber, 1 to 3 meters high, with tendrils. Stems and leaves are usually hairless and smooth. (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*, balloon vine, stem is covered in bristly hairs).

**Leaves:** Bright green in colour with serrated margins. Biternate.

**Flowers:** White or yellow in colour, 2-3mm long in few open clusters. Flowers mainly from January to June (although flowers may be present throughout the year).

**Fruits:** Membranous inflated capsules approximately 25mm long. Green turning brown with seeds being round and black with a kidney-shaped white spot.



Figure 2: *C. halicacabum* on *Acacia tortilis*

### Damage

*C. halicacabum* can be found sprawling over indigenous vegetation and has the capability of smothering a tree of up to 10 meters tall. It invades forest margins, woodland, grassland, riverbanks, kloofs, floodplains and rocky sites.

### Control

Heart pea vine is relatively easy to kill. As long as the root is destroyed, the rest of the plant can be left to wither and die. There are no specific herbicides registered for the weed, therefore the best method for eradication is uprooting.

### Contact address

Please report any sightings of *C. halicacabum* in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park to:

Alien Biota Section  
Private Bag X402  
Skukuza  
1350  
Tel: (013) 735 4114 Fax: (013) 735 4051  
E-mail: [aliens@parks-sa.co.za](mailto:aliens@parks-sa.co.za)

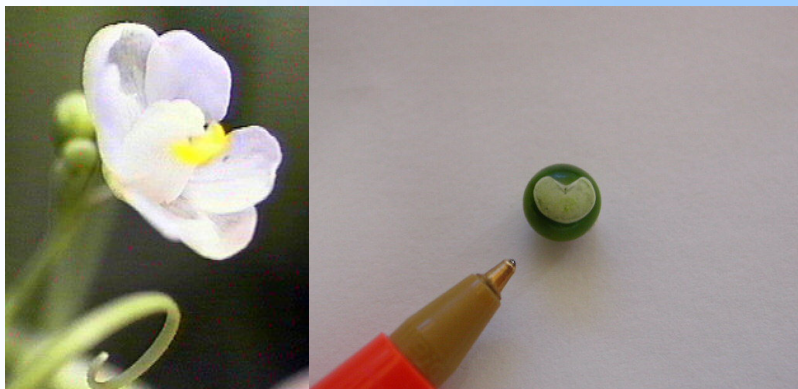


Figure 1: Flower (above left) and Seed (above right)

