

# Potato Creeper

*(Solanum Seaforthianum)*



## Alternative Common Name

Brazilian nightshade, climbing nightshade (English), aartappelranker (Afrikaans), ijalamu (isiZulu)

## Description

A slender herbaceous or woody climber growing 2-3m high with bright green leaves that are thinly textured and deeply lobed into leaflets. Showy blue to purple flowers with yellow centres in long drooping clusters bloom from December to March. Small, shiny berries 5-10mm across, green turning red then black.



A close-up of the leaves



A close-up of the berries

## Where does this species come from?

Tropical America

## How does it spread?

Seed dispersal

## Why is it a problem?

Overtops and smothers other species. Poisonous. Indigenous birds could neglect the dispersal of indigenous plants as a consequence of their preference for the fruits of this alien species

**Fruits, leaves and stems are poisonous to humans especially small children.**

## Does the plant have any uses?

It is used as an ornamental. Birds eat the berries.

## Other Facts

The species is related to the potato and the tomato plants.

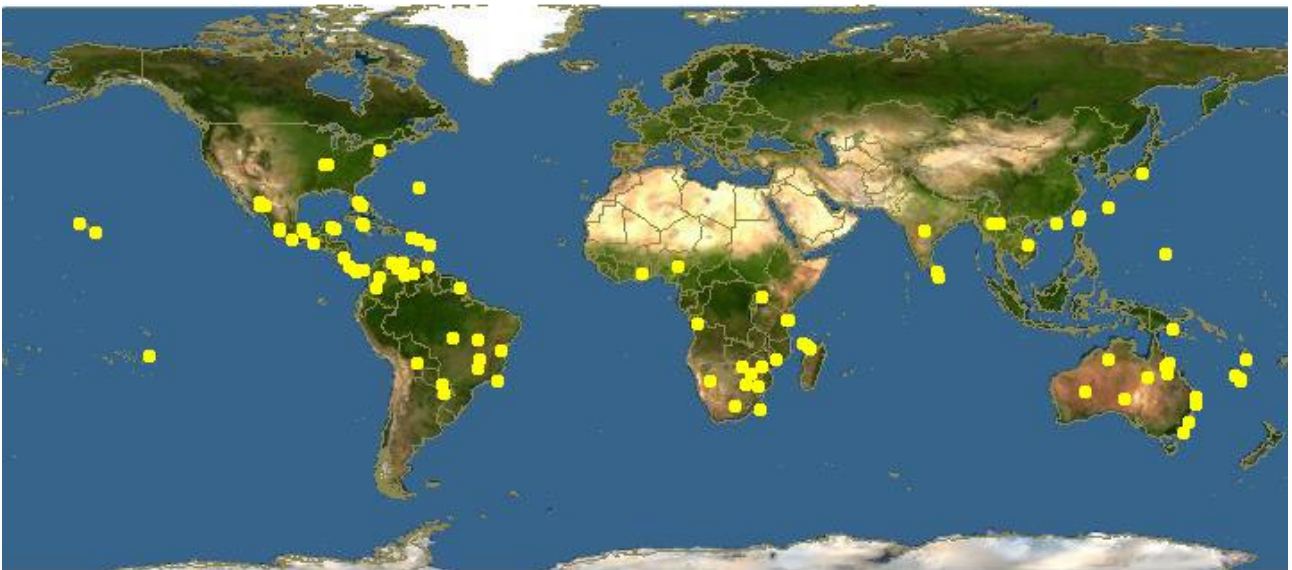
This plant has been declared invasive in Australia, other parts of Africa, Indochina, Pacific Islands and India.

It has been included in the Global Invasive Species Database.

It is a noxious weed that must be controlled.

Genus name appears to come from the Latin word *solamen* meaning comfort, solace, or soothing in reference to the purported sedative and healing effects obtained from application of the leaves of some genus plants to cuts, wounds, inflammations or skin problems.

Specific epithet honours Lord Seaforth (Francis Mackenzie Humberston - 1754-1815) who was a British politician who served as Governor of the Caribbean Island of Barbados from 1800 to 1806 during which time he reportedly sent back to England for cultivation a large number of West Indian plants.



**World wide distribution map of Potato Creeper**

## How to control the plant?

Most of the time the plant can be pulled out as it has a very shallow root system. When pulling is not possible, cut the stem, then use a registered herbicide to paint a layer of poison onto the remaining stem.

When the plant has berries, we recommend that the berries are cut off before the plant is pulled.