

****Cuscuta epithymum*****LESSER DODDER**

(L.) L.

Flowering period: August–December.

Description: Twining annual to weakly perennial parasitic weed native to Europe that produces a profusion of greenish-yellow to reddish fine stems often forming rope-like entwined masses in and around host plants. Seeds germinate with the first rains and quickly parasitise a range of species; however, the most common host is the weed *Trachyandra divaricata*, although the species will also parasitise native pigface, *Carpobrotus virescens*. Flowers glistening white in small, dense, globular clusters along the stem are produced in abundance throughout the growing season and followed by a spherical capsule containing four seeds.

Pollination: Unknown.

Distribution: Common and often locally abundant from Shark Bay to South Australia but most common on calcareous coastal dunes.

Control: Difficult other than direct removal prior to seeding.

Notes: Although a strongly parasitic weed the preference of lesser dodder to heavily parasitise the highly pernicious *Trachyandra divaricata* and *Pelargonium capitatum* may present interesting opportunities for the use of lesser dodder as a form of biological control. Appears that few native species are host species for lesser dodder.



Habit



Flowers



Flowers



Distribution