



INVASIVE WEED ALERT

MOTH PLANT



For help & advice
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What does it look like?

Rampant, evergreen vine (<10 m tall) with smelly, milky sap and twining flexible stems that are covered in down and woody near the base. Dark green leaves (3-12 x 2-6 cm) are hairless and dull on the top, greyish-downy underneath, and opposite on the stems. Clusters of 2-4 bell-shaped white flowers (20-25 mm diameter Dec-May), occasionally with pink streaks, are followed by distinctive thick, leathery, pear-shaped choko-like pods (10 x 7 cm) containing kapok-like pulp, which splits open to disperse many black, thistledown-like seeds.

Wind spreads seed from gardens, roadsides, orchards, hedges, plantations, vacant and industrial land.

What damage does it do?

Germinates in light wells or semi-shade inside established forest, often long distance from seed source, and smothers and kills plants up into the canopy, preventing the establishment of native plant species. Feeding parts of butterflies drinking from the flowers become gummed up, leading to eventual starvation and death.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Intact and disturbed forest and margins, tracks, coastline, cliffs, shrublands, mangroves, inshore and offshore islands, almost any frost-free habitat.

Control Methods

Poisonous, causes dermatitis, protect skin against contact with sap.

Destroy ripe pods first to minimise seeding and continue to pull up seedlings (all year round).

- Stump swab (best in summer-autumn): a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L) or a product containing 200g 2,4-D+100g dicamba/L (200ml/L) or dicamba 50g/L (400ml/L).
- Spray (summer-autumn): Cut down or dig out if possible. Alternatively spray with 5g metsulfuron-methyl per 10l water plus penetrant (could be dishliquid). 5g sachets are free from NRC (and weedaction) cheap and effective.
- Pods can be bagged with a cup of water and left to rot down then composted, or they can be burnt. Leave remaining cut material on site to rot down.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

