

# Moth plant

## Asclepiadaceae - *Araujia hortorum*



### What does it look like?

Moth plant is a fast-growing vine that can reach 10m tall. The twining stems release a milky sap when they're broken. The leaves are arranged in opposite pairs along the stems and are dark green with greyish-downy undersides. The white flowers are bell-shaped, white, and about 25mm across. It produces very distinctive, large (approx. 10cm long), pear-shaped pods full of tiny seeds that are attached to long, silken hairs. Moth plant can grow in almost any frost-free habitat, including intact and disturbed forest, forest margins, tracks, cliffs, riparian margins, shrublands, and islands. It is also a problem in urban reserves and gardens where it can spread quickly. It prefers loose, fertile soils in warm, wet areas. It establishes most freely in semi-shade but will tolerate exposure to full light once it reaches the canopy of shrubs, hedges, or trees.

### Why is it a problem?

Moth plant can rapidly smother and replace native vegetation. It easily overtops shrubs and small trees, weighing and breaking them down. It also spreads over the ground, dominating seedlings and native plants of small stature. Easily spread by wind dispersal, due to its prolific seeding abilities.

### Control Methods

#### Physical control

- Gloves are recommended when handling moth plant. Pull out seedlings. Roots of large plants should be cut off at least 5cm underground; or

#### Herbicide control

- Cut down and stump-treat larger stems with 200mls Banvine® per 1 litre water or 100mls Brushkiller per 1 litre water or Metgel
- Clear off desirable trees and spray carefully with 120mls Banvine® per 10 litres water or 120mls Brushkiller per 10 litres water or 5g metsulfuron-methyl (600 g/kg e.g. Escort®) + 10mls penetrant per 10 litres water. Spraying of pods with this product appears to kill seeds as well.

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

### Request more information

<https://www.hbrc.govt.nz/environment/pest-control/pest-hub/pest-hub-enquiry-form>

### Pest Management Programme

- National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)