

# Moth plant

*Araujia hortorum*

## Notify Council

If you think you have found Moth plant, report it to Greater Wellington Regional Council within 10 working days.

## What is council doing about this?

Greater Wellington staff and/or contractors will carry out control work of moth plant at all known sites in the region.

## 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 broken. The leaves are arranged in opposite pairs along the stems. Topsides of the leaves are a dull, dark green with greyish-downy undersides. The white flowers are bell-shaped, may have some pink on them, and are about 25 mm across. Distinctive, large (approx. 10cm long), pear-shaped pods full of tiny fluffy seeds that can drift long distances on air currents are produced.

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, preventing regeneration in a range of habitats. 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. Seeds are poisonous and the sap can cause contact dermatitis.

## Control Methods

If you think you have found Moth plant, report it to GW. A Biosecurity Officer will help you identify the plant and will carry out any control work necessary. You can email us on [pest.plants@gw.govt.nz](mailto:pest.plants@gw.govt.nz)

## Related Links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/627/Mothplant>

NZ Flora <http://www.nzflora.info/factsheet/Taxon/Araujia-hortorum.html>

Unwanted Organisms Register [https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species\\_id=36701](https://www1.maf.govt.nz/uor-cgi/uor.pl/show?species_id=36701)

NZ Plant Conservation Network <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/arauja-sericifera/>

GW Regional Pest Management Plan <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pest-management/>

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/mothplant/>

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## Rules

An occupier shall, upon receipt of a written direction from an authorised person, destroy\* any Moth plant present on the land they occupy.

\*For the purpose of this rule, destroy means the permanent preclusion of the plant's ability to set viable seed.

Under Section 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 no person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any pest in a Pest Management Plan, or any unwanted organism. Not complying with Section 52 or 53 is an offence under the Act, and may result in penalties noted in Section 157(1).

The National Pest Plant Accord is designed to prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (the Accord list) within New Zealand. If allowed to spread further, these pest plants could seriously damage the New Zealand economy and environment.

## Management Programme

Eradication programme