

MOTH PLANT

Araujia sericifera syn. *A. hortorum*



MOTH PLANT POD



MOTH PLANT SEEDLING



MOTH PLANT VINE WITH FLOWERS

Moth plant is a fast-growing vine that can rapidly smother and kill other vegetation, as well as spread incredibly fast.

Also known as cruel plant, milk vine or kapok vine, this climbing vine species, originally from South America, was brought into NZ as an ornamental plant.

It is a major problem in Kaipātiki as it thrives in urban reserves and gardens where it can spread quickly. Butterflies, moths and bees are attracted to its flowers and can become trapped in them, hence the common name, 'cruel plant'.

To help native plant life flourish, as well as improve human health or wellbeing, removal of moth plant is advised.

Features of Moth Plant



- Flowers are creamy coloured and appear in clusters from spring.



- Large green seed pods, which look a bit like fruit of choko vine.



- Leaves are pointed oblongs or arrowhead shaped, pale underneath.
- Fast growing vine up to 6m tall.

MOTH PLANT

Manual Control

For seedlings and smaller vines:

Pull out by the roots and leave off the ground to die.
If the root breaks off, dig it out and dispose of.

For larger vines with pods:

- Collect all seed pods for disposal (watch out for dripping sap)
- Dig out vine roots and broken roots to prevent regrowth
- Leave vine off the ground to die (do not pull off and damage host trees, especially if vine is wound tightly around branches)

Disposal

- Collect pods and roots and dispose of with household waste to landfill or use a community pest plant bin

Herbicide Control

- Remove and collect all seed pods first (watch out for dripping sap)
- Cut vine at base, near the ground, and paint cut vine(s) with a smear of Cut 'n' Paste MetGel*.
- For larger vines, repeat as above leaving a slightly longer stump, scrape bark surface and apply to scraped stump as well.
- Leave the vine to die hanging off the ground.
- Dispose of the pods carefully.

Important

- **Handling moth plant**, please avoid contact with the milky sap - the sap is an irritant. When removing moth plant, it is advised to wear gloves and long sleeves and, if removing pods, also bring a rubbish bag to collect them in.
- ***For all herbicides:** avoid contact with skin and eyes; Read labels thoroughly before use; Apply sparingly, only in dry weather conditions; Avoid dripping onto soil or using near waterways. Cut'n'Paste MetGel is a Trademark. MetGel can affect non-target plants through soil transmission.

Habitat and Distribution

- Moth plant is known to spread through almost any frost-free habitat.
- Moth plant establishes best in semi-shaded areas, but can tolerate full light conditions when it reaches the canopy of the shrub/tree/hedge it is living on.

Method of Spread

- When seed pods mature and dry, they crack open releasing hundreds of parachute-like seeds.
- There are 250 to 1000 seeds in each pod, that disperse in wind and/or water, travelling large distances.
- Root fragments in the soil will regrow and become new vines.

Life Cycle

- Moth plant flowers anytime between November and May. Pods usually present between February and June.
- The seeds can still grow into vines more than 5 years after being shed from the plant.

Further Information

To prevent infestation and reseeding, DO NOT dispose of moth plant in your compost, or in regular garden waste bins. Please dispose of moth plant to your local community weed bin or household waste to landfill.

If you have questions, want assistance, or want to borrow weeding resources, email pestplants@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz

For more information on pest plants including disposal, visit www.pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz/pest-plant-resources



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