

# Moth plant

*Araujia sericifera*

Detect this pest plant before it becomes a problem

## Why it's a problem:

- Moth plant is a vine that smothers and replaces native species, preventing regeneration in a range of habitats.
- It produces masses of viable fluffy seeds that are wind-blown and can drift long distances on air currents.
- The milky white sap can cause skin irritations in susceptible people and the seeds are poisonous.

## Appearance:

- Moth plant is a perennial, broad-leaved, herbaceous climber and can grow to over 5m tall.
- Dark green leaves (3-12cm x 2-6cm) are hairless and dull on the top, greyish-downy underneath, and opposite on the stems.
- Clusters of two to four bell-shaped, white flowers (20-25mm diameter), occasionally with pink streaks, appear from December to May
- Distinctive thick, leathery, pear-shaped pods which split open to disperse many black, thistledown-like seeds.

## Location:

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



## Get more information:

- [Weedbusters](#) provides descriptions and images to help with pest identification.
- [Agpest](#) is an identification tool for pests, biology, impact and management for farmers and agricultural professionals.
- [iNaturalist](#) is a sharing tool that contributes to biodiversity science for avid nature observers.
- Manaaki Whenua – [Landcare Research](#) provides information on weeds and biocontrol
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) (MPI) for information on protecting New Zealand from biological risk.
- Practice [biosecurity hygiene](#) to stop the spreading of pests.

Contact us:

09/09/2020

If you see this plant on your property or need help to identify a plant in the Wellington Region, contact us on **0800 496 734** or email [pest.plants@gw.govt.nz](mailto:pest.plants@gw.govt.nz).

We help to support landowners with the management of this pest plant found in the Wellington Region.