

● Mistflower (*Ageratina riparia*)

Introduction

Mistflower forms large dense colonies of semi-woody stems. It completely smothers existing plant communities, replacing native species and preventing regeneration.

In pasture, Mistflower has no feed value, reduces carrying capacity and restricts movement of stock and machinery. It may be toxic to stock.

Origin

Mistflower is a native of Mexico and the West Indies. It was introduced to New Zealand as an



Mistflower

Pest Plant Status

In the Bay of Plenty region Mistflower is classified as a **Regional Surveillance Pest Plant**. (Refer Regional Environment Bay of Plenty's Pest Management Strategy).

Land occupiers are not required to control mistflower but are encouraged to do so and may receive assistance from Environment Bay of Plenty by way of approved programmes.

It is banned from sale, propagation and distribution within New Zealand.

ornamental garden plant and was first recorded as naturalised in 1931.

It is now common throughout the Auckland region, as well as Northland, Coromandel and parts of the Bay of Plenty.

Description

Mistflower is a low growing, scrambling perennial herb that grows up to 1m high, reproducing by seed and layering.

It has a short thick root system from which fibrous roots extend downwards and outwards. Numerous reddish brown stems ascend and are more or less prostrate in the lower part of the plant, rooting at the joints where

they contact the soil.

Clusters of small white flowers are formed from August to December. Seeds are dark brown to black, 2mm long and topped by fine white hairs. Mature plants may produce between 10,000 and 100,000 seeds annually.

The toothed leaves are opposite each other and are up to 70mm long and 25mm wide, tapering to each end.

Invasion

The seeds of Mistflower are dispersed by wind or water, or mud sticking to machinery, animals and footwear. Existing infestations may increase in size and density by layering.



Mistflower leaves and flower

Mistflower prefers warm, wet conditions and semi-shaded areas such as forest margins and stream banks.

It can also become a weed of open places and poorly managed pasture.

Control

Manual

Mistflower can be controlled physically by clearing the land and removing all rootstocks. Revegetation should be carried out to prevent re-infestation of Mistflower and any other weeds.

Herbicide

- **Glyphosate** (e.g. Roundup®) 100mls/10 litres water plus 20mls penetrant (e.g. Pulse®)

Biological Control

In 1998 a fungal pathogen was released in New Zealand, this fungus has been very successful at controlling Mistflower in Hawaii.

A further biological control agent in the form of a gall fly was released in 2001. The larvae of this agent forms galls in the stems, this disrupts the sap flow, removing nutrients to the growing tips of the plant and reduces it's ability to produce viable seed.

Information in this fact sheet regarding herbicides does not necessarily appear on the labels of the products concerned. Environment Bay of Plenty does not accept liability for any damage that may arise from use of chemicals at non-standard rates. Mention of product trade names implies neither endorsement of those products nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.



For further information and advice, contact your local pest plant officer at Environment Bay of Plenty:

Telephone: 0800 ENV BOP (368 267)
 Facsimile: 0800 ENV FAX (368 329)
 Pollution Hotline: 0800 73 83 93
 Email: info@envbop.govt.nz
 Website: www.envbop.govt.nz
 Address: 5 Quay Street, P O Box 364, Whakatane, New Zealand

This fact sheet was prepared by Environment Bay of Plenty's Pest Plant Section.

This factsheet was last updated August 2003