

Hunter Region Priority Weed

Mother-of-millions

Toxic to livestock and pets



Photo: B Johnston

Management guide



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*. All land managers have a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) to contain the spread of weeds.

“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”

The Regional priority for Mother-of-millions is to protect assets from the weed’s impacts. In order to achieve this Land Managers are asked to:

Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land. Mitigate spread of the weed from their land. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment.

For further information contact your local Weeds Officer via [Hunter Regional Weeds](#) or visit [NSW WeedWise](#).

Impacts

Mother-of-millions is a serious weed in many parts of the Hunter Region.

- Toxin, *Bufadienolides*, in plant causes heart failure. All parts poisonous. Flowers contain five times more poison than stems and leaves.
- Poisonous to livestock, domestic pets (especially dogs) and humans. Poisoning most common in May through October during flowering.
- Toxins accumulate over time; even small amounts add to toxic build-up.
- Stock eating small amounts over several days may develop diarrhoea (sometimes bloody), drool saliva, dribble urine and then die of heart failure.
- Large amounts eaten cause sudden death. 5 kg will kill an adult cow.

- Poisoned stock must be treated within 24 hours of consuming the plant. If suspected, consult a vet immediately.
- A succulent. Very hardy, well adapted to dry conditions.
- Like most succulents, it can spread by broken fragments of leaves and stem.
- Produces many seeds which remain viable in soil for years.
- Leaves have small plantlets around edges which quickly grow to form large colonies.
- Rapidly colonises bushland, roadsides, fence lines, creek and river banks.
- Often found near rubbish tips and abandoned houses.
- Grows well on gravel and sandy soils, although will grow anywhere.

Management

- Difficult to control. Prevention and ongoing monitoring is best method. Check for infestations during winter as flowering makes it easy to see.
- Care must be taken to ensure control methods do not cause further spread.
- Several control options. All require regular monitoring for regrowth.
- Hand removal: Good option for small infestations. Ensure you collect all pieces and plantlets. Bag, seal and destroy.
- Fire: Good, economical method for larger infestations. Use a hot fire. Check with RFS for permit details.
- Herbicide: Needs sufficient wetting agent to penetrate waxy covering on all plant parts.
- May be more palatable after spraying. Dead plants remain toxic. Exclude livestock.
- Once removal of the infestation is complete, the infested area should be revegetated with more desirable plants to provide competition to future seedlings and plantlets.
- Check herbicides used for residual effect before attempting to revegetate.

Identification



Mother-of-millions. Often spread by people mistakenly taking it home to gardens due to its attractive flowers.

Photo: John Hosking



The stems are pinkish-brown or greyish in colour. The leaves are pencil-shaped, pale green to pale brown in colour with dark brown patches and a shallow groove on the upper surface.

Photo: John Hosking



Up to seven projections are found at the tip of each leaf, which are easily broken off and can develop into new plants.

Photo: John Hosking



The flowers are orange-red through to pink in colour and occur in a cluster at the top of a single stem. Flowers contain five times more poison than stems and leaves. *Photo: Josh Biddle*



A hybrid Mother-of-millions plant, showing the differing boat shaped leaf with notches on the edges.

Photo: Barry Shepherd



Mother-of-millions infestation. This plant can rapidly colonise new areas by accidental or deliberate spread through seed or fragments or plantlets. Birds, wind, water, machinery or poor control methods can all contribute to its spread.

Photo: John Hosking

Management Calendar

The calendar below outlines the management approach for a typical year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Growth stage	Germination, seedlings and growth.				Flowering - Often easiest to see during flowering.						Germination, seedlings and growth.	
Action	Spray at any time if plants are not under stress. Hand removal at any time.											
				Marginal, may be sprayed if plants lush and growing well.	Best time for herbicide control to prevent new seed setting.			Marginal, may be sprayed if plants lush and growing well.				

Recommended control options may vary according to your area. There are experienced professional Weeds Officers based in each Local Government Area who have local knowledge and can provide expert advice for your weed management situation. Contact your expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or at Hunter Regional Weeds.

Herbicide control options for all areas in NSW, including current herbicide registrations, are available for Mother-of-millions at <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/93>.

Remember that all herbicide must be used and handled in accordance with the label or permit.

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/MotherOfMillions>



Get the WeedWise app

Further information

For further information on how to meet your General Biosecurity Duty on your property your, best source is the expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or via Hunter Regional Weeds.

Contact Hunter Regional Weeds

www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au

Hunter Local Land Services

www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au

NSW Weed Wise

www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

