

# Mother of Millions

Mother of millions (*Bryophyllum* species) is a drought hardy succulent garden plant. It rapidly produces tiny plant-lets that quickly form new colonies.

## WHAT IS MOTHER OF MILLIONS?

As the name suggests, mother of millions reproduces rapidly, producing hundreds of tiny plantlets which quickly form new colonies. It is adapted to dry conditions and can survive long periods of drought. This increases the plant's potential to persist and spread. Mother of millions is toxic when ingested by livestock; it is also poisonous to humans and household pets.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY

Mother of millions belongs to the genus *Bryophyllum*. Mother of millions is a succulent perennial plant:

- Growing 30cm to 1m in height.
- The stems are pinkish-brown or greyish in colour.
- The leaves are pencil-shaped, pale green to pale brown in colour with dark green patches and a shallow groove on the upper surface.
- There are up to seven projections at the tip of each leaf which when broken off can develop into new plants.
- The flowers are orange-red in colour and occur in a cluster at the top of a single stem.
- Flowering can occur from May to October.

## HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

The common name 'mother of millions' is based on the plant's ability to reproduce vegetatively in large numbers. Each plant produces small plantlets along the edges of its leaves which detach and form new plants. This makes mother of millions hard to eradicate and follow up controls are necessary. Mother of millions also produces numerous seeds which can survive in the soil for a number of years before germinating.



## CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Preventing the spread of mother of millions is the best control measure. Learn to identify mother of millions and regularly check for it in winter when the plants are in flower and are easier to see. If found remove immediately using a combination of control methods including hand removal, fire, herbicide application and rehabilitation. Regularly check creek lines after floods for new infestations.

### Hand removal

For small infestations, mother of millions can be removed by pulling up individual plants by hand. Once the plants have been removed they should be burnt; stored in black plastic bags until completely decayed or buried.



### Herbicide application

Thorough spraying of mother of millions with herbicides is effective if sufficient wetting agent (non ionic surfactant) is used to penetrate the waxy outer covering of the plants – especially that of the plantlets. Mother of millions may be controlled with herbicides at any time of the year if the plants are not stressed, but infestations are easiest to see in winter when the plants are in flower. Spraying during flowering also prevents new seeds from developing. Late autumn or early spring may be a better option if the plants are lush and growing well, because they are more likely to readily absorb the chemical. In areas that regularly flood, avoid spraying when flooding is likely.



### Fire

Permits may be required to light fires – check with your local NSW Rural Fire Service for permit details. For large infestations, fire is the most economical control option available and will kill the plants and much of the seed stored in the soil. Using fire first will reduce the cost of any spray applications. When using fire, fence off infested areas to limit stock access and build up a fuel load. Control burn the area using a hot fire. In following years any regrowth should be spot sprayed. Some groups have reported a 30 per cent reduction in mother of millions each year by using control burning with follow-up spot spraying.



## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Landowners under the Biosecurity Act 2015 have a General Biosecurity Duty (GBD) where they are expected to, within reason, know about any weeds which may impact their land.

### Regional Recommended Measure – ERADICATION

Land managers should mitigate the risk of the plant being introduced to their land. Eradicate the plant from the land and keep the land free of the plant. A person should not deal with the plant, where dealings include but are not limited to buying, selling, growing, moving, carrying or releasing the plant. Notify local control authority if found.

## GET THE FREE WEEDS APP

NSW Department of Primary Industries have developed an app that provides key information to help users reduce the impact of over 320 weeds in NSW, called NSW WeedWise.

Users can search or browse weed names (common or scientific), recognise a weed by its physical description and image gallery, and find out about its impacts, where it occurs, how it spreads and its preferred habitat.

NSW WeedWise is a free smartphone app available through app stores.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit Council's website [www.midwestern.nsw.gov.au](http://www.midwestern.nsw.gov.au), or the Department of Primary Industries website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) and search 'weeds'. Council's Weeds Team are available to assist on 6378 2939 or at [weeds.admin@midwestern.nsw.gov.au](mailto:weeds.admin@midwestern.nsw.gov.au).

### DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and should not be relied upon as the complete source of information to be considered. This document is not intended as a substitute for consulting relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances.

Reference: NSW DPI