

# Mistflower and Mexican devil

*Ageratina riparia* and *Ageratina adenophora*

25



Mistflower



Mexican devil

## Mistflower

**Plant type:** Perennial herb or subshrub

### Identifying features

- Clusters of small white flowers from August to January.
- Small dark brown five-angled seeds follow flowering.
- Coarsely serrated willow-like leaves arranged in opposite pairs along the stem.
- Stems are usually purple and are covered in purple striped non-sticky hairs.
- Stems branch in opposite pairs and become woody with age.
- Stems occasionally die back in winter.

## Mexican devil

**Plant type:** Perennial herb or subshrub

### Identifying features

- Dense clusters of small white flowers from August to December.
- Small black five-angled seeds follow flowering.
- Diamond shaped leaves with irregular round-toothed edges arranged in opposite pairs along the stem.
- Stems are usually purple and are covered stalked sticky hairs.
- Stems branch in opposite pairs and often die back in winter.
- Stems often have galls which are formed by a parasitic fly.

## Why mistflower and Mexican devil are pest plants

Mistflower and Mexican devil grow densely, overtopping groundcovers and preventing native plant species from regenerating. Both plants can invade a wide range of habitats and are especially happy in riparian areas where they compete with vulnerable native plant species. Mistflower can grow in shady, damp areas and most soil types but is limited by dry conditions and frost. Mexican devil also tolerates moderate shade as well as drought and damp conditions.

Mistflower and Mexican devil grow very quickly and produce many highly viable seeds. Drooping stems can also take root in wet sites wherever they touch the ground. Both these pest plants are toxic to livestock. A biocontrol fungus has been introduced to help control mist flower in New Zealand.

## Plant type

Aquatic

Fern

Grass

✓ Ground cover

Shrub

Tree

Vine

✓ Biennial or perennial

## Disposal

✓ Compost

✓ Herbicide

✓ Bury deeply

✗ Report it



Mistflower leaves.



Mexican devil leaves.

## Responsibility for control

In all parts of the Waikato region excluding Thames-Coromandel district land owners/occupiers are responsible for the total control of Mistflower or Mexican devil on their property.

## Summary of herbicides and application methods for control

When using herbicides:

- read the instructions on the manufacturer's label closely
- always wear protective clothing
- always minimise the risk to desirable plants
- contact the supplier for further advice.

Herbicide	Application
<b>Glyphosate and metsulferon-methyl</b> Such as Roundup, Escort or Associate.	Weed wipe
<b>Glyphosate and metsulferon-methyl</b> plus penetrant such as Pulse	Spray

**All land occupiers in the Waikato region, excluding Thames-Coromandel district are responsible for the total control of these pests**

## Important contacts

Biosecurity pest plant contractors in the Waikato region – 0800 BIOSECURITY (0800 246 732).

For information phone the Waikato Regional Council's freephone 0800 800 401 or check out [www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/pests](http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/pests).

For more information on pest plants, check out [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz).



## More information

Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS).

What makes a pest a pest? – A guide to the Waikato Regional Pest Management Strategy (free).

Plant Me Instead – Plants to Use in Place of Common Pest Plants (free).

The New Zealand Pest Plant Manual (National Pest Plant Accord Identification Guide) – \$10.00 incl. GST.

Poisonous Plants and Fungi in New Zealand – A Guide for Parents, Schools and Child Minders (\$15.00 incl. GST).