



Inverell Shire Council

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL UNIT

Please address all correspondence to the General Manager, Inverell Shire Council,
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Mother-of-millions

Mother-of-millions (*Bryophyllum* spp.) is a native plant of Madagascar. Its beautiful flowers have made it a popular garden plant in eastern Australia, especially in the drier, inland areas. Unfortunately, **mother-of-millions is highly toxic to stock!**

Mother-of-millions is well named. Each plant produces thousands of plantlets which detach to form new plants. Its attractive flowers have made it a popular garden plant - its ability to reproduce in such large numbers and to withstand droughts explains why it has escaped from gardens and rubbish tips to become a serious problem in many rural areas.

EFFECT ON ANIMALS

Mother-of-millions, particularly at flowering, can be **VERY POISONOUS**. It continues to claim the lives of cattle throughout the north west. In one of the worst reported cases in recent times, 125 cattle died in 1997 after feeding on mother-of-millions on a Moree stock reserve (*M. Kane, Moree*). Greatest risk is during dry times when feed is scarce. And/or, when cattle are stressed or in unfamiliar territory (eg a new paddock) they are more likely to try plants they wouldn't normally touch. To quote from the [Queensland Department of Natural Resources Pest Fact](#) (P33 Mar 00) on mother-of-millions, "POISONING SYMPTOMS in cattle include signs of dullness, loss of appetite, diarrhoea and heart failure. There are two responses to poisoning; acute, where cattle die within a day, and chronic, where cattle may take up to 5 days to die. Some cattle may make a slow recovery if insufficient plant material was eaten. TREATMENT OF POISONED STOCK must occur within 24 hours of consuming the plant. The treatment is intense and needs to be given by or under the direction of a veterinarian."



IDENTIFICATION

Mother-of millions is a hardy, drought-resistant succulent. The plants grow upright (to 1m) thin "stems", each containing numerous small "branches" or leaves. There are also hybrid versions which have similar flowers but serrated "branches". Each leaf produces a number of plantlets. The plant flowers in the winter. PLEASE NOTE that there other cacti-type plants that have a similar flower to mother-of-millions. Unlike these other plants, mother-of-millions stems are generally about the same thickness from top to bottom. Also, mother-of-millions plants don't have large, flat, "saw-tooth" leaves at the **base** of the plant. (Be aware that these other look-alikes may still be toxic to animals – the best advice is to keep stock away from any of these plants!)

MORE INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL WEEDS OFFICER:

Les Tanner 02 6728 8284 - mobile 0427 241 806

Phil Sutton 02 6728 8244 - 0418 446 068

OR check out Council's website on www.inverell.nsw.gov.au, Environmental Services section

MORE INFORMATION?

Poisonous Plants Handbook for Farmers & Graziers by EJ McBarron, Inkata Press ISBN 0909605297. NSW Dept of Primary Industries has on its weeds website an [Agfact](#) on poisonous plants. Queensland DPI also has a very good Factsheet on mother of millions on its website.

CC4(B) MANAGEMENT PLAN – Legal requirements within the Shire of Inverell

The growth and spread of the plant must be controlled by conducting an on-going and effective treatment program to reduce plant numbers and to minimise the plant's negative impact on the land. Boundaries and waterways must be kept free of the plant to prevent spread from the property. All reasonable measures are to be taken to ensure vehicles, machinery and livestock moved off the property are free of the plant. Plant must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed.



This photo shows one of the mother-of-millions' hybrid cousins. Note the serrated leaves... Still toxic!

CONTROL METHODS

Non-Chemical Options: Plants can be removed and burnt or stored in black plastic bags until completely destroyed. Encourage a strong pasture competition.

Chemical Options: Winter is usually the best time to treat mother-of-millions. The plants are then in flower and easier to find. According to NSW Dept of Primary Industries' excellent booklet "**Noxious and Environmental Weed Control Handbook 3rd Edition**", treatments include:

Chemical options	Rate: Spot/Boom	Comments
Triclopyr + picloram 300 g/L + 100 g/L. (Various trade eg <i>Grazon</i> ®)	500 mL per 100 L water Add surfactant.	Apply at flowering.
Fluroxypyr 200 g/L Various trade names eg <i>Starane</i> ®	600 mL per 100 L water. Add surfactant.	Actively growing seedlings and young plants before flowering.
2,4-D amine 500 g/L Various trade names	500 mL per 100 L water. Add surfactant.	Thorough, even coverage of leaves and plantlets is necessary.
Other herbicides		
Metsulfuron methyl Various trade names PLUS glyphosate 360 g/L various trade names	10 g metsulfuron methyl plus 200 mL glyphosate 360 to 100 L water. Add non-ionic surfactant as per label	Hand directed spraying only. Apply at or just prior to flowering. Refer to permit (PER7156) for full details.

IMPORTANT: USE OF PESTICIDES - ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

Pesticides must only be used for the purpose for which they are registered and must not be used in any other situation or in any manner contrary to the directions on the label. Never use herbicide in any way contrary to the label recommendations.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained herein is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Inverell Shire Council or the user's independent adviser.

(LRT 07/07/09)

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