

# Araujia hortorum

## COMMON NAMES

moth plant, moth vine

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rampant, evergreen vine to 10 m tall with smelly, milky sap. Stems twining, flexible, tough, downy, woody near base. Leaves opposite, 3-12 x 2-6 cm, dark green, hairless and dull above, greyish-downy below. Flowers bell-shaped, 20-25 mm diam, white, occ with pale pink streaks, usually in 2-4 clusters, Dec-May (can trap and kill insects). Distinctive pear-shaped choko-like pod, 10 x 7 cm, thick and leathery, containing kapok-like pulp, splits open dispersing many black, thistle down-like seeds.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The sticky sap is useful when identifying seedlings and tuberous roots. When fruiting the large seed pods are unmistakable.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. coastal, lowland cliff, bluff, waste places and other modified habitats (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

## GENUS

Araujia

## FAMILY

Asclepiadaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Araujia hortorum* E.Fourn.

## SYNONYMS

*Araujia sericifera* sensu NZ botanists

## FLOWERING

December, January, February, March, April, May

## FRUITING

Autumn and winter (ARC, 1998).

## YEAR NATURALISED

1888

## ORIGIN

S Brazil, Argentina



Northcote, Auckland. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 11/03/2007, Licence: CC BY.



*Araujia sericifera* kapok and seeds. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Seeds are viable for at least 5 years (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Freely sets seed, 400 per follicle; dispersed by wind (ibid.).

## POISONOUS PLANT

The white latex substance in all parts of this plant is poisonous.

## ETYMOLOGY

**araujia**: Named after 19th century Portugese statesman and plant collector, Antonio de Matos Araujo.

## NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

**This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord.** The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## NVS CODE

ARAHOR

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/araujia-hortorum/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026