

Araujia sericifera

COMMON NAME

Moth plant, moth vine

FAMILY

Asclepiadaceae

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Dicotyledonous Lianes and Related Trailing Plants

NVS CODE

ARASER

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not assessed

HABITAT

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

FEATURES

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.

FLOWERING

December, January, February, March, April, May

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

Autumn and winter (ARC, 1998).

YEAR NATURALISED

1888

ORIGIN

S Brazil, Argentina

ETYMOLOGY

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



Coromandel, Feb. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Araujia sericifera showing flowers.
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

Reason For Introduction

Ornamental

Life Cycle Comments

Perennial. Seeds are viable for at least 5 years (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Seed

Freely sets seed, 400 per follicle (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Dispersal

Wind (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Poisonous plant:

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

MORE INFORMATION

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