

Parietaria judaica Asthma Weed or Pellitory

Description

Originating from Europe, Asthma Weed is also known as Pellitory or Sticky Weed.

Asthma Weed is a many-branched perennial herb that grows up to 1 m high. Leaves are green, soft, an oval shape with pointed ends, and are 2 cm to 8 cm long. Leaves are arranged alternately along pink or red stems. Roots are pink or red, and woody on older plants.

Flowers are very small, light green in colour, and clustered along the stems. Leaves, flowers and stems are covered with sticky hairs that will stick to skin, clothing and animal fur.

The Problem

Asthma Weed pollen may cause asthma, conjunctivitis, rhinitis and hay fever. Contact with plants may cause skin rashes and other allergic reactions. It is recommended that long clothing, a dust mask or half face respirator, eye protection (goggles or glasses) and protective gloves be worn when handling this weed.

Asthma Weed is common on open ground, in moist gullies, in and around sandstone outcrops, and as a groundcover in disturbed areas. Is also commonly found in gardens, often growing out of rock crevices, walls and cracks in cement.

Plants grow and produce seed very rapidly (within 2-3 weeks under favourable conditions). Regrowth is persistent, and plants can flower and set seed most of the year.

Noxious Weed

Asthma Weed is a declared noxious weed throughout NSW and it is the responsibility of the owners of private land as well as their occupants to ensure that reasonable and effective measures are taken to control infestations.

Under the newly amended Noxious Weeds Act 1993, Asthma Weed is a declared Class 4 noxious weed where *small infestations on privately owned land, all plants must be removed/destroyed. For large infestations, the spatial extent must be reduced by a minimum of 25% annually.*

Control

Hand pull Asthma Weed plants taking care to remove the entire root system, or else it will reshoot. Place in a plastic bag and dispose in the garbage. Check clothing, tools and gloves for pieces of the plant, to prevent further spread. Mulch bare soils to reduce regrowth.



Asthma Weed. Source: Adam Burrowes, Sydney Weeds Committees

Follow up treatment will need to occur within three weeks of initial treatment, and may need to be repeated several times to eradicate this weed. It is crucial to control Asthma Weed prior to seeding.

If roots are firmly caught in cracks in stone walls or concrete, a Glyphosate based herbicide may need to be used. Apply the herbicide to the plants while actively growing, and prior to flowering if possible. Spray the plants thoroughly for effective treatment.

Please contact Council for further advice prior to completing chemical control of Asthma Weed.

Further Information

For further information please contact Environmental Services on 9748 9999.

Reference

Pellitory Sydney Weeds Committees
www.sydneyweeds.org.au