

Mother of Thousands

(*Bryophyllum delagoense*)



Alternative Common Name

Chandelier Plant, Mother of Millions (English), Kandelaarplant (Afrikaans).

Description

An erect, hairless succulent perennial growing 1.2m high with grey-green, mottled leaves often having darker green to reddish spots. Flowers are pale orange to deep magenta appearing from June to July on the end of an erect stalk.

Where does this species come from?

Madagascar

How does it spread?

Dispersal is by seeds. Any piece of the plant left on the ground will grow again.

Why is it a problem?

It competes with indigenous species and is **very poisonous to humans and animals**. The plant is unwelcome because it can cause fatal poisoning, particularly in grazing animals. This plant thrives in humidity.

Why is it called Mother of Thousands?



Every seed that drops becomes another plant. So one “Mother” plant can literally have thousands of children. Every leaf that breaks off the host becomes another plant.

Does the plant have any uses?

It has been introduced to many countries as an ornamental plant. However, this use cannot compensate for the plant's overall negative impact.

How to eradicate the plant?

This plant is extremely difficult to eradicate. **DO NOT SLASH.** If you do, the seeds will disperse and germinate where they land. Each individual plant has to be pulled out very carefully, preferably before seeding. The removed plants must be placed in bags. Home owners are requested to contact the Honorary Rangers who will remove the bags.

Follow ups are extremely important as regrowth can occur for many years.

Plant me instead alternatives



Purple Spotted Aloe
pictured left
(*Aloe parvibracteata*)
Pers-bontaalwyn

or

Grey Aloe (*Aloe chabaudii*) Grysaalwyn

Aloes provide nectar during the winter which is an important source of food for the attractive sunbirds and many other nectar drinking birds during the cooler period of the year when food is not readily available.