Wandering Jew
(Tradescantia Zebrina)

Alternative Common Name
Purple wandering Jew (English), wandelende Jood (Afrikaans), cockroach grass.

Description
Wandering Jew is a trailing perennial grown for its foliage. The fleshy leaves have two silvery stripes and purple undersides. Flowers bloom intermittently throughout the year.

Warning!
It often causes skin irritations in humans.

Where does this species come from?
Mexico

How does it spread?
It reproduces and spreads from stem and root fragments. Seeds are spread by vehicles, machinery, water and in soil.

Why is it a problem?
It causes skin irritations and invades moist, shaded sites, ***disturbed*** forests and stream banks.
The roots are capable of sprouting new surface growth on their own.
Most pieces of an existing plant are capable of rooting and growing another plant.

A disturbance is a temporary change in environmental conditions that cause a pronounced change in an ecosystem eg. fire or flood

Why is it called a Wandering Jew?
Apparently there is an immortal Jew wandering earth who has been alive since the crucifixion of Jesus and he will continue to wander until the second coming. So the plant, like an immortal wanderer, eventually gets everywhere.

How to eradicate the plant?
The stems are extremely brittle. Eradication depends on one being able to collect every piece of plant from the area to be cleared. All roots must be carefully removed. For small areas, this isn't that tough, but the bigger the patch to be cleared, the more careful you have to be.
Roundup and other herbicides do not work.