

# noxious weeds

threatening the health of the local environment

## WEEDY PLANTS

Crofton weed and mistflower, natives of Mexico, are two very similar invasive weeds of forest edges, creekbanks and wet pasture.



J Miles

### Crofton weed (*Ageratina adenophora*)

A perennial (long-lived) herbaceous plant which produces multiple stems, usually 1-2 metres high, rarely to 3 metres, from a woody rootstock.

White flowers emerge in spring and can mature and disperse seed within a month or so. The seed is spread by wind, water and in contaminated soil or agricultural produce.

Plants can also spread vegetatively by rooting where broken or flattened stems contact the soil and from segments of root moved during cultivation or earthworks.

Crofton weed is a plant of waste ground and wet areas such as creek banks. It invades wetter pastures as well as forest edges and clearings, creek banks, roadside drains and other disturbed areas. It tolerates quite deep shade and full sun, forming dense stands which choke out all other plants.

It is a common weed of coastal Queensland and NSW as far south as the Illawarra, with outlying infestations in Bega Valley Shire around Eden, Pambula and Brown Mountain/Bemboka and in Eurobodalla.

In pasture it reduces carrying capacity and is toxic to horses, causing lung damage. This may take some years to develop but is invariably fatal. Cattle find Crofton weed unpalatable and sheep and goats eat it without any apparent ill-effect.

Control is by hand removal of small infestations, slashing (prior to flowering) and establishment of a dense, vigorous pasture in the agricultural setting. Herbicide is an effective method, but should be used only when the plant is actively growing, and with care in the vicinity of native vegetation and wet areas.

It is listed as a Class 4 noxious weed under Control Order 28. The growth of the plant must be managed in a manner that reduces its numbers, spread and incidence and continuously inhibits its reproduction and the plant must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed. It is noxious in Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Local Government Areas.

noxious weed



Crofton weed

If using herbicides be sure to read the label and heed the label. Consult your local Council weeds staff or herbicide supplier for more detailed information about control methods.

# weedy plants: a threat to agriculture and the environment

for more information please contact:

Illawarra District Noxious Weeds Authority	(02) 4233 1129
Shoalhaven City Council	(02) 4429 3111
Eurobodalla Shire Council	(02) 4474 1000
Bega Valley Shire Council	(02) 6499 2222



## Mistflower (*Ageratina riparia*)

The broad, diamond-shaped to almost triangular leaves of Crofton weed are distinctive, even when the plant is not in flower. Another weed, **mistflower** (*Ageratina riparia*) is very similar and grows in much the same habitat, but has narrower leaves. It is also highly invasive, particularly in wet, shady situations, and may also be toxic. **It is listed as noxious in Shoalhaven Local Government Area.**

**A biological control agent, white smut fungus, has become available for mistflower**, but unfortunately does not affect Crofton weed. It has been released at a few locations in the Illawarra and produces white patches on the underside of the leaves, followed by leaf death and defoliation.

noxious weed



## Indian weed (*Sigesbeckia orientalis*)

**Indian weed** (*Sigesbeckia orientalis*) has a similar leaf shape to Crofton weed, but its leaves are more arrowhead shaped with a lobed base and flowers are yellow and surrounded by sticky bracts. **It can also behave in a weedy fashion**, proliferating after disturbance such as fire or flood.

**Opinions differ** as to whether Indian weed is a native plant or introduced, but it is very widespread on the coast and ranges, including in undisturbed forest, and is not listed as a noxious weed.

look-alike

