

environmental weeds

Weedy succulents
on the South Coast

SUCCULENTS

Century plant
Prickly pear
Yucca

Heart-leaf iceplant
Cotyledon
Stonecrop
Soap aloe

Mother-of-millions

Succulents are popular in coastal gardens for their drought-hardiness and salt tolerance. However, many have escaped from gardens into the bush around towns. They are particularly likely to occur in rocky areas such as sea cliffs, where they can replace native groundcovers. Only prickly pear is listed as a noxious weed, as well as a Weed of National Significance (WoNS), but many others are equally damaging in natural ecosystems.



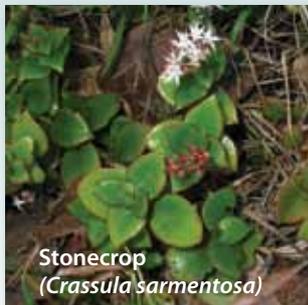
A carpet of stonecrop growing on a sea cliff.



The aptly named mother-of-millions infesting bush



Stonecrop
(*Crassula multicava*)



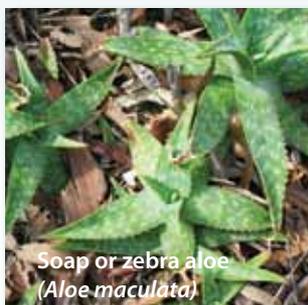
Stonecrop
(*Crassula sarmentosa*)



Cotyledon
(*Cotyledon orbiculata*)



Mother-of-millions
(*Bryophyllum delagoense*)



Soap or zebra aloe
(*Aloe maculata*)



Century plant
(*Agave americana*)

The best way to help prevent the spread of succulents is not to grow them in your garden, and not to dump them in the bush. While some have fleshy fruits that are dispersed by birds or other animals, many are spread mainly by dumping, of whole plants or plant fragments. There are drought-hardy natives or less invasive exotics that could be used instead. A few are shown at the end of this leaflet, and your local nursery may be able to suggest others.

Control of succulents is very difficult. Consult your local Council weeds staff for 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



Yucca or dagger plant (*Yucca aloifolia*)



Heart-leaf iceplant (*Aptenia cordifolia*)

Prickly pear

Prickly pear (several *Opuntia* species) was once a major pest of grazing lands in inland eastern Australia, until the importation of biological control agents. The cochineal insect and *Cactoblastis* moth feed on the fleshy stems, turning them to mush and destroying the plants. These insects do not persist well in the cooler climate of southern NSW, and prickly pear can be quite invasive on the south coast. It is spread both by seed, which is carried in a fleshy fruit and vegetatively when broken off segments take root. It is illegal to grow any type of prickly pear except for the spineless Indian fig (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) which is sometimes grown for its edible fruit.



Prickly pear fruits



Broken off segments will take root

✓ Grow these instead*

Here are a few suggestions for replacements for weedy succulents which are suitable for south coast gardens.



Pigface (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) is a native of eastern Australian beaches, dunes and seacliffs. Avoid the similar but yellow-flowered Hottentot fig (*C. edulis*) which is not native.



Climbing guinea-flower (*Hibbertia scandens*) is hardier than its lush appearance would suggest, and can be used as a groundcover as well as a climber. It is native to the coast, as far south as Bermagui.



Plectranthus graveolens is a tough perennial herb in the mint family. It has thick, velvety-hairy leaves and erect spikes of small blue flowers. It commonly grows in rocky areas of the coast and ranges.



Hybrid pinks (*Dianthus X allwoodii*) come in a variety of flower colours. They form a spreading, silvery foliaged mat and are very hardy, but non-weedy. They come from Europe.

***Grow Me Instead** – a guide for gardeners on the New South Wales South Coast. Available from your local Council.