

Ageratum conyzoides

Recognize the problem

Family: Asteraceae (daisy family).

Common names: goatweed.

Kiswahili: matawana.

Annual broadleaved herb with green, purplish or reddish stems (0.3–1 (1.5) m tall). Stem branched and covered in short white hairs on young parts and nodes; shallow fibrous roots.

Leaves: Bright green, sparsely hairy, rough with prominent veins, triangular to egg-shaped (20–100 mm long and 5–50 mm wide) margins bluntly toothed with blunt or pointed tips, in opposite pairs; hairy petioles (5–75 mm); characteristic odour when crushed, smelling like a male goat.

Flowers: Blue to lavender, fluffy, sometimes with a white head in compact terminal cluster bearing 4–18 flowerheads (each 4–5 mm across and 4–6 mm long), with slender, hardly exserted styles; slightly aromatic.

Fruits: Brown, small, dry and one-seeded.

Background

Origin: Latin America.

Introduction: As ornamental.

Habitat: Humid tropical and subtropical regions; grows on both light and heavy soils; prefers moist habitat but also grows in dry areas.

Spread: The seeds are mainly spread by wind and water, but are also readily dispersed on clothing or animal fur and machines.

Invades: Croplands, plantations, pasture, grasslands, disturbed land, wasteland, urban open space, fallow land, roadsides, railways, drainage ditches, riparian areas and forest edges/gaps.

Impacts: This weed reduces crop yields and is an important alternate host of a number of economically important crop pathogens and nematodes. It also readily displaces native plant species. It excludes native grasses and medicinally important plants, reduces native plant abundance and creates homogenous monospecific stands. The species is an aggressive short-term colonizer of gaps in vegetation. It can become dominant following overgrazing. In Tigray, northern Ethiopia, accidental consumption of the seeds with sorghum was implicated in the cause of liver disease resulting in the deaths of 27 people and numerous livestock.

Ageratum conyzoides flowers have 4–18 flowerheads, 4–5 mm across. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)



Leaves are triangular to egg-shaped, up to 10 cm long. (Photo by Arne Witt, CABI)



Scientific name(s) > ***Ageratum conyzoides***

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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