

WEED NOTE Mid-West

Ice plant

(*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*)

FAMILY: Aizoaceae

STATUS: Alien, invasive (spreads rapidly)².

TYPE: Spreading, annual/biannual herb.

IDENTIFICATION: *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* (ice plant) leaves are ovate and covered by large bladder cells that give them a distinctive glistening appearance³.

DESCRIPTION: Ice plant grows like a mat along the ground up to 1 metre across and is covered in large³. Plants usually produce small white flowers during spring².

DISTRIBUTION: Ice plant is a native to South Africa².

PREFERRED HABITAT: Ice plant is generally a weed of saline farmland soils, granite rocks in arid areas, salt lake margins² and sand dunes³.

KNOWN LOCATIONS IN WA:

Ice plant has been recorded over widespread areas from Carnarvon to Eucla².

Plate 1: Mature plant



Plate 2: Leaf



Plate 3: Leaves



Plate 4: Distinguishing feature



THREAT/ IMPACT: Environmental and Agricultural

Ice plant can form dense mats that prevent the germination of other plants and since plants accumulate salt, when the plant dies the salt leaches into the soil surrounding the individual, preventing less salt tolerant species from establishing³. Seed can persist in the soil for 20+ years¹.

References

- 1 Western Australian Herbarium, FloraBase, Department of Environment and Conservation (2012). *mesembryanthemum crystallinum*. Accessed from: <<http://florabase.dec.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/2813>>. [3 October 2012].
- 2 Hussey B.M.J, Keighery, G.J., Dodd, J., Lloyd, S.G., Cousens, R.D., (2007). *Western Weeds A Guide to the Weeds of Western Australia*, (2nd Edition), Weeds Society of Western Australia, Victoria Park, Western Australia.
- 3 CSIRO (2012). *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*. Accessed from: <<http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/WfHC/Mesembryanthemum/index.html>>. [3 October 2012].

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