



## CHICKWEED – by Warren Loader

Warren Loader - Greenage Landscape & Design

Hi folks There has been a lot of chat on social media lately about *Drymaria Cordata*, commonly known as Chickweed. I would like to offer some advice and dispel some myths surrounding this stubborn weed.

It is an aggressive, shade tolerant, fast-growing weed with the potential to outcompete and completely replace native vegetation such as lawn. It inhibits the germination and establishment of native plants because it grows forming a dense mat at ground level that covers and kills all other plants.

Chickweed is listed as one of the most aggressive weeds invading moist habitats in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. *Drymaria Cordata* produces large amount of seeds (> 600 seeds/plants) and also spreads vegetatively rooting from the nodes, which is a trait that enable plants to multiply rapidly and colonize large areas very quickly. It has the potential to harm other plants by smothering them under a solid blanket of leaves and by climbing into the bushes. It can be potentially harmful to birds and small pets as their sticky seeds can cause them trouble. It is actually quite easy to get rid of. Firstly, please don't use a natural mixture of salt or vinegar and lemon juice or a combination thereof as this will kill the grass that you are trying to save. Please also do not use Roundup, Springbok, Clearout or any of the other Glyphosate products as they kill all plants. Some mixtures may have a residue effect and may harm your soil for many years without you even knowing it. Mowing or weed eating the plant will also not kill it but will actually help spread the seeds further across the lawn. Please remember that if you do use a mower on this weed to wash the mower before using it again or on another uninfected part of the garden. It is also important to note that garden services are probably the biggest spreaders of the weed. Make sure to ask the supervisor if they have washed their equipment at their previous garden and ask workers to brush down their pants and boots. Dogs that go on walks also are carriers of the seeds.

There is an easy way of killing this weed and it is to spray with a broad leaf herbicide. The herbicide should contain the active ingredient of 24-D as well as MCPA. Please note that a product without the 24-D will not kill it but may only knock it back a bit. Spraying should take place on a cool day where no rain is forecast. The mixing instructions should be 70ml per 5 litres of water and the spray should be sprayed as a mist evenly over the entire lawn and not be concentrated on the weeds alone. It may need a second application after a week to two if your spray was slightly under requirement. Make sure you do not spray other plants and shrubs. If you follow these steps you will have a chickweed free lawn in no time.

If you would like further help in the matter, feel free to contact me on 072 889 0663.

