

Call to report invasive Madeira vine

Good looks can be deceiving, especially when it comes to the Madeira vine.

It may have small white star-shaped flowers and soft, heart-shaped leaves but this invasive species is known to cause ecological damage as it smothers and displaces any tree, including the Milkwoods which are classified as one of South Africa's protected trees.

The project manager of the City's Invasive Species Unit, based in Westlake, Ulrike Irlich, asks the public to report any sightings of this invasive vine, *Anredera cordifolia*, which is trying to establish itself across Cape Town.

This invasive species has been classified under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) as a Category 1b species, meaning it must be controlled or removed and destroyed if possible.

Any form of trade or planting of it is strictly prohibited.

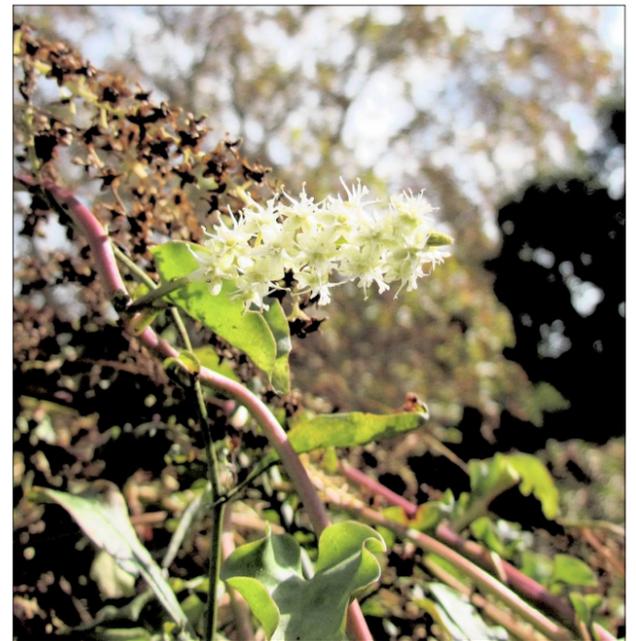
Ms Irlich said they have received reports of Madeira vine growing in Somerset West, Durbanville, Marina da Gama, Clovelly, Camps Bay, Rosebank, Claremont, Berglyet, Tokai and Constantia.

Commonly known as Madeira vine, bridal wreath, potato vine or lamb's tail vine, it is an evergreen vine native to tropical South America, which spreads out in a dense mat when unsupported, or climbs into tree canopies.

The vine can climb to heights of up to 40m. The leaves are slightly



Madreia vine like this one pictured on the corner of Zwaanswyk and Charnwood roads spreads out in a dense mat when unsupported, or climbs into tree canopies up to 40m.



Small, white, star-shaped flowers appear on long stalks between February and May and are similar in appearance to a lamb's tail.

fleshy and soft, bright green and heart-shaped.

The stems are hairless, twining, and can become 30m long, initially being green or pink-red and herbaceous, advancing to become brown and woody with age, reaching 2cm to 3cm in diameter.

Small, white, star-shaped flowers appear on long stalks between February and May, similar in appearance to a lamb's tail, and being

numerous and densely arranged on the plant, giving it a soft appearance.

In the Noordhoek area it has started smothering Milkwood trees, *Sideroxylon inerme*.

The Madeira vine spreads through wart-like tubers on the stems or underground.

These regenerate from cut or broken stem sections, making it a particularly troublesome exotic and

that is able to smother or bring down trees.

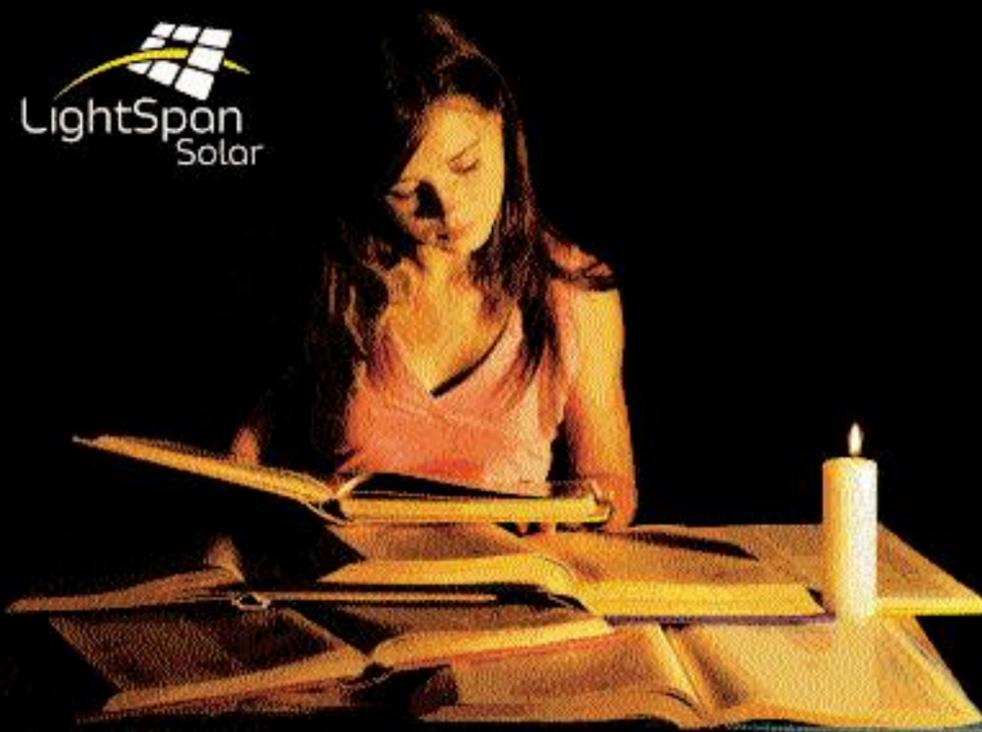
Ms Irlich says that due to the vine spreading by tuber growth and root systems, it is critically important not to discard plant material in compost heaps, landfills or dumping sites.

Instead, residents should contact the City for advice about disposing plants of any size.

Residents who want to take part

in reporting invasive species or obtain more information on Madeira vine and invasive species in general can visit www.capetowninvasives.org.za or Facebook www.facebook.com/ctinvasives

They can report sightings to the Cape Town Invasive Species Unit: invasive.species@capetown.gov.za, 021 444 2356/7, or email ulrike.irlich@capetown.gov.za

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