

Baby's breath

Gypsophila paniculata

Description

Commonly cultivated for cut and dry floral arrangements; often included in wildflower seed mixes.

Habit

Perennial, finely branched, bushy, 0.4-1 m (15-39 in) tall.

Leaves

Lance-like, with sharply pointed tips; 2-7 cm (1-4 in) long and 0.25-1 cm (0.2-0.4 in) wide; opposite; smaller at top of the stems.

Stems

Smooth; glaucous or somewhat rough near base.

Flowers

Tiny, white or pale reddish in color, 5 petals, 0.15-0.3 in across, located at branch tips,



abundant, fragrant; bloom in July through August.

Fruits and Seeds

Fruit a rounded capsule, up to 14000 seeds per plant.

Habitat

Native to Europe. Found in disturbed sites, particularly in dunes, prairies and barrens; prefers sunny, slightly alkaline sands.

Reproduction

Primarily by seed; plant breaks off and rolls in wind, dispersing seed widely.

Similar

Native flowering spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*) but lacks milky sap.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor dunes and other sandy areas including roadsides and railroad tracks. Baby's breath can be controlled by cutting the tap root as far under ground as possible - below the point where the stem meets the root (10 cm deep). If severed above this point, the tap root may resprout. Dispose of cut plants by burning. Spot burning plants with a propane torch also provides effective control, torch until wilting occurs; mature plants will need re-treatment later in the season or in following year.

Credits

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