

Baby's Breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*)

BY GYPS PAN

Erect, bushy perennial up to 1 metre tall. Introduced from Eurasia as an ornamental. Now grown as a crop and used extensively in floral arrangement.



Distribution

Limited distribution in the Southern Interior.

Quick ID

Small white, sweet-scented flowers.

Flower tops look like wispy clouds.

Bluish-green stems and branches; overall bushy appearance.

Opposite linear leaves with a prominent white mid-vein.

Interesting Facts:

Can out-complete healthy perennial grasses.

"Look-Alike" Species

Pearly everlasting, *Anaphalis margaritacea*, appears similar but the main distinguishable difference is that pearly everlasting has soft-hairy foliage, alternate leaves, and it not bushy or heavily branched.



Manual Treatment: Severing the crown from the root by cultivation or hand-cutting below the soil surface usually kills Baby's breath. Regrowth is rare if the complete crown is removed.



Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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Flowers: Numerous, small, white (occasionally pink) flowers at stem's end—heavily branched clusters. Five petalled flowers, 1.5 to 3 mm wide. A fused, cuplike group of sepals below the flower petals has 5 teeth.



Leaves and Stems: Many-branched, slender stems are swollen at the nodes. Leaves are linear, opposite, hairless, and covered with a powdery white film, which produces a bluish look. Prominent white mid-veins are generally 1.8 to 10 cm, but size decreases toward top. Very few leaves are present when flowers have bloomed.



Seeds: The fruit is a small, egg-shaped capsule with four compartments, each containing 2 to 5 black, kidney-shaped seeds. Can produce over 13,000 seeds per plant.

Roots: Up to 3.6 metres deep, thick, woody tap root. The root has sufficient reserves to survive two years of adverse growing conditions.

Reproduction and Dispersal: By seeds only. Most seeds fall near the parent plant, but mature plants often break off at ground level and wind tumble, dispersing many seeds much further.



Habitat Preference: Disturbed areas, grasslands, pastures, roadsides. Prefers sandy and slightly alkaline soils.