

# ICE PLANT *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*

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# ICE PLANT

## *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*



**Alternative name:** Common Ice Plant.

**Family:** Aizoaceae.

**Description:** There are 2 introduced species of Ice Plant widespread in some saline localities of temperate WA, SA, Vic and NSW. They are *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* and *Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum*. They are prostrate succulent annuals or biennials with white yellow-centred flowers with many fine petals. Fruit a 5-celled capsule. Flowers mostly spring to early summer.

**Key features:** *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* has thick undulate leaves 1–10 cm wide and is covered with glistening protuberances. *Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum* has opposite linear leaves less than about 2 mm wide that fall early. Seeds D-shaped, reddish, about 1 mm diameter.

**Value:** Rarely eaten by stock. Often an indicator of saline land. Replace with other plants if improved grazing outcome is required.

**Salinity and waterlogging tolerance:** Moderate tolerance to saline soils. Poor tolerance to sustained waterlogging.

**Notes:** Both species are native to South Africa. Common in areas that have regular winter rainfall. Plants germinate in cooler months and reach maturity in spring or early summer. Some may continue to grow into second year.

**References:** *Flora of South Australia*, Jessop and Toelken (eds), Part 1, 4<sup>th</sup> edition 1986. *Flora of Victoria*, Walsh and Entwisle (eds), Vol. 3, 1996. *Flora of NSW*, Harden (ed), Vol. 1, 1990. *Plants of Western NSW*, Cunningham et al., 1981.

