

Seen this plant? Alligator weed

Alternanthera philoxeroides



How does this weed affect us?

Potentially devastating weed species that grows in water bodies and adjacent riparian areas. Vigorous growth habit and tolerance to routine/normal control measures.

- Dominates water surfaces (limiting light penetration) altering the endemic biome of natural aquatic environments. Impacts creek and river banks altering terrestrial environments simultaneously.
- Threat to industries reliant on irrigation due to disruption of waterways and damage to infrastructure.
- Restricts livestock access to water sources.
- Creates a monocultured ecosystem reducing biodiversity.
- Impacts human access and recreational use of water bodies (threat to tourism industry).
- Dense build-up of "mats" increases sedimentation and severity of flooding events.
- Preliminary studies suggest consumption can lead to photosensitisation and cancerous lesions in unpigmented livestock.
- Reduces land productivity.
- Chemical treatment options limited – physical removal usually part of effective control strategies (increasing costs).

Seen it? Call us:

**Cootamundra-Gundagai
Biosecurity Officer:**

1300 459 689

**NSW DPI Biosecurity
Helpline:**

1800 680 244

Help protect our land, plants and wildlife.

**For control and biosecurity information visit NSW
WeedWise: weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/AlligatorWeed**



Where are you likely to find it?

Native of South America, Northern Argentina and adjacent countries. Dominates water bodies and riparian zones. Significant incursions exist in the Hunter region. Coastal incursions occurring in NSW from Newcastle to Wollongong though incursions have been identified in the Griffith LGA. There is now an estimated total area of 3,950 ha of known alligator weed in NSW, with 2,500 ha of terrestrial infestations and 500 ha of aquatic infestations occurring in the Lower Hunter region. The current distribution is small when compared to the potential range of the weed.

What does it look like?

Summer growing perennial herb. Shiny, spear-shaped leaves (2-7cm long and 1-2cm wide) occur in opposite pairs along the stems. Forms dense "mats" of interwoven stems that grow up to 60cm high and 10m long in water. Mats progressively become impenetrable and capable of supporting considerable weight. Stems hollow. Small white papery flowers appear November-March and are held on short stalks rising from leaf axils. Does not produce viable seed in Australia – spread dependent on disturbance in which plant segments (stems or root nodes) disperse and form new plants. Adaptive root system – fine and short roots in water morphing to thick, rhizome-like in soil. Able to penetrate 0.5-1m into soil profile with storage tissues allowing survival over extended dry periods. Visit NSW Weed Wise for further information.



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