

Alligator weed

Alternanthera philoxeroides

ALLIGATOR WEED BIOSECURITY ZONE ESTABLISHED

Alligator weed is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) that currently has serious impacts in Australia and worldwide. This highly invasive perennial plant can grow on land or in water, and has the potential to spread and affect waterways, wetlands and floodplains throughout most of southern and eastern Australia.



Distribution

More than 500 infestations have been found in the Sydney metropolitan area, and numerous infestations have been reported in many regional areas across NSW.

There is an estimated total area of 3,950ha of known Alligator weed in NSW, with 2,500ha 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.

Description

The leaves are spear-shaped, dark green, and glossy. They are arranged in opposite pairs along the stems, ranging from 2-12cm in length and 0.5-4cm in width.

The papery white flowers are ball-shaped and sit on short stalks of 1-9cm. The plant flowers during summer.

The stems are hollow in the aquatic form, which aids floatation. The terrestrial plant's stems may be a reddish colour and are not usually hollow.

Habitat

Alligator weed is both aquatic and terrestrial. Mainly found in waterways and on their banks, floodplains, or even in dry areas such as backyard gardens.

Reproduction and dispersal

Alligator weed does not produce viable seed in NSW and spreads vegetatively.

Plant fragments can create new infestations when they float downstream or are moved through human activities, e.g. plant fragments spread on earthmoving machinery and boats, and in soil or turf.



Alligator weed *Alternanthera philoxeroides*



(Photo source: G. Pritchard.)



(Photo source: Rous County Council.)

Declaration: Biosecurity Zone

The Alligator Weed Biosecurity Zone is established for all land within the state except land in the following regions: Greater Sydney; Hunter (but only in the local government areas of City of Lake Macquarie, City of Maitland, City of Newcastle or Port Stephens).

Within the Biosecurity Zone this weed must be eradicated where practicable, or as much of the weed destroyed as practicable, and any remaining weed suppressed. The local control authority must be notified of any new infestations of this weed within the Biosecurity Zone.

Control

Control should not be attempted by individuals as Alligator weed can spread very easily from fragments. If you have seen, or think you have seen, Alligator weed please contact Rous County Council on (02) 6623 3800 for a positive identification.



For further information contact:

Rous County Council
02 6623 3800

www.rous.nsw.gov.au

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