



Alligator Weed

(*Alternanthera philoxeroides*)

Is Alligator Weed on your property?

Alligator Weed is included in Horizon's Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy as a Zero Density Plant. All infestations will be controlled to Zero-density as and when they are found. Zero-Density means the control of the pest plant to the last individual. Pest plant species that are limited in distribution will fall under this objective. If you see any plants growing in the Region, or have difficulty with identification of aquatic plants, please contact us on free phone 0508 800 800.



Identification

Perennial aquatic or terrestrial herb, with long fibrous roots. Soft, pink hollow stems creep or float on water with upright tips, forming dense mats. Opposite leaves are waxy and dark green. White clover-like flowers are present December-February. No seeds.

Weedy characteristics

Alligator weed forms dense mats with roots down to 2 m deep. It grows rapidly, stem sections break off and root. Tolerant to 30% sea water, high temperatures, high pollutant levels and grazing. Intolerant to frost.

Methods of dispersal

Spreads by stem sections only via water flow. Boats, diggers, livestock and dumped vegetation can all cause contamination of new catchments.

Impact on indigenous plants

Replaces most other herbaceous species in water and on land. Causes silt accumulation and flooding. Rotting vegetation degrades aquatic habitats for fish and other water dwellers.

Typical habitats

Freshwater and brackish sites, estuaries and wetlands. Also dry pastures and crops.

Control

1. Ensure Agasicles and Vogtia biological control agents are present. They are very slow acting and only effective in late season where plants grow above water.
2. Dig out small patches. Dispose and check for regrowth.
3. Weed wiper (both water and land) with Escort 2 gm/l + penetrant.
4. Spray land sites with Escort at gorse rates, Tordon Pasture Boss or Tordon 2G at label rates, or glyphosate 2% + penetrant. Spring and autumn.
5. Spray aquatic sites with glyphosate 2% + penetrant. Spring and autumn. (May need resource consent.)
6. Cover with weedmat for 6-12 months. Check edges for creeping stems.

Site management

Exclude livestock and maintain riparian planting. Spray where possible.

Species recovery

Stems have the potential to sprout at every node.

For more information freephone 0508 800 800.

