

Oxygen Weed

(Lagarosiphon major)

Is Oxygen weed on your property?

Oxygen weed is included in Horizon's Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy as a Containment aquatic pest plant. This means that the plant is already in the region but further spread needs to be checked. The most effective way to manage aquatic plants is to control the dispersal pathways. If you see any sites where it is growing or can help with details of the plant, please contact us on free phone 0508 800 800.



Photo courtesy of NIWA

Identification

A perennial with submerged roots reaching to 5 metres. Leaves recurve backwards or downwards and arranged spirally around the stem. Minute marginal serrations also present. Tiny pinkish flowers. Only female plants found in New Zealand.

Weedy characteristics

Grows in moderate to well lit submerged sites in low to high temperatures. Rapid growth results in tall, long-lived, dense vegetation that overtops smaller native species. Stems break easily. Oxygen weed lacks native plant competitors of similar height in New Zealand.

Methods of dispersal

Will colonise new sites as loose stem fragments root at any node. Lateral buds in stems form new shoots and roots. Water flow dispersal within catchments, between catchments via boats and other water sport equipment or machinery.

Impact on indigenous plants

Forms vast deep meadows, shading out smaller native species, and preventing recruitment. Large clumps will dislodge, causing flooding. Rotting vegetation turns water stagnant, killing fauna and flora. Is a serious threat to dune lakes and native species.

Typical habitats

River, lakes, dune lakes and other still or slow-moving waterbodies with moderate - high light.

Control

1. Bottom lining: kills whole patches, including roots. Lay material carefully to ensure fragments are not released. Begin at upstream end of infestation.
2. Lower water level, mechanically remove, and use bottom lining where necessary.
3. Suction removal. Work methodically to trap all fragments, ensure collection bags do not leak. Water flow can assist to shift infestation downstream.
4. Grass carp: requires consent, refer to Department of Conservation policies.
5. Diquat gel, physical cutting. Generally not recommended. Use only as a temporary measure.

Site management

Almost impossible to kill, except in small patches. In narrow waterbodies, manipulate the plants growing conditions by reducing the light to make it less competitive. For example, the planting of trees to create shade.

Species recovery

Diquat gel 'cuts' stems into pieces that may grow and re-establish.

For more information freephone 0508 800 800.

