

Dense waterweed

Egeria densa



Dense waterweed is a problem in a number of waterways, where it is easily dispersed from broken stem pieces. This breaking of stems into segments is a natural occurrence in autumn, and is supplemented by unnatural breakage through external damage to the plant. Dense waterweed is commonly used in home aquariums and ponds and its appearance in some waterways has been blamed on the illegal dumping of aquarium contents.

Dense waterweed will thrive in slow-flowing, shallow water or in the presence of high nutrient levels. It forms extremely dense, submerged masses that can seriously retard water flow. Growth may interfere with irrigation equipment, hydro-electric activity and potable water supplies. Other activities like fishing, boating and swimming may also be impeded.



Legal requirements

Dense waterweed is not a prohibited or restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. However, by law, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants under their control.

Local governments must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in their area. This plan may include actions to be taken on certain species. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.

Description

Dense waterweed grows in an underwater mass, with stems up to about 1.5 m long.

Dense waterweed is usually firmly attached to mud on the creek bed, but occasionally appears as dense mats floating just below the surface.

The leaves are up to 4 cm long with tiny serrations on the margins. They grow in whorls of 4 or 5 (sometimes as many as 8) and are most densely clustered at branch ends near growing tips. Flowers are only 2 cm in diameter, and have 3 white petals. Roots are very fine and grow from the lower nodes.

A native of Brazil, dense waterweed has caused many problems overseas, particularly in the United States of America.

Control

Diquat is registered for control of 'pond weeds' in all states. There are no herbicides specifically registered for the control of dense waterweed in Queensland.

The usual removal methods include hand pulling, cutting and digging with machines. The latter may be quite costly, and all methods need to be thorough to reduce the likelihood of regeneration from broken plant pieces.

You can help to prevent this problem by never disposing of unwanted aquarium plants or waste in waterways. Act on small weed infestations as soon as possible to avoid a rapidly growing problem.

Herbicide control

See Table 1 for herbicides for control.

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Table 1. Herbicides for the control of dense waterweed

Situation	Herbicide	Rate	Comments
Aquatic areas	Diquat 200 g/L (e.g. Reglone)	5 L/megalitre water	Apply by injection below the surface or as a surface spray

Read the label carefully before use and always use the herbicide in accordance with the directions on the label.

This fact sheet is developed with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

Fact sheets are available from Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) service centres and our Customer Service Centre (telephone 13 25 23). Check our website at biosecurity.qld.gov.au to ensure you have the latest version of this fact sheet. The control methods referred to in this fact sheet should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation, and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the use of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, DAF does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

