

Water Lettuce

Botanical Name: *Pistia stratiotes*

Weed Class: Class 1 Noxious Weed

Important: As Water lettuce is a “Notifiable Weed” any person who believes they have located an infestation of Water lettuce, regardless of the area, are required to notify a Weeds Officer at Clarence Valley Council within 3 days of identification.

Control Options

You are encouraged to report the infestation and have it controlled by trained Council staff. The use of herbicides near waterways requires care due to their possible environment impacts. Under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 a licence is required. Consult with DECC & EPA.

Herbicide applications in water should be reported to the Grafton EPA (ph 6640 2500) if the proposed control is: large areas, close to other residents, or may cause a problem to adjoining landholders. Please observe all environmental and safety cautions that are stated on the label.

The following herbicides are accepted by Council for the control of Water lettuce. Only herbicides that are registered for use in NSW and in a manner and rate stated on the label (or a current pesticide order) may be used.

Chemical Control:

- * DIQUAT 200 g/L – Reglone ® – Foliar spray
- * DIQUAT 20 g/L – Vegetrol ® – Foliar spray
- * GLYPHOSATE 360 g/L – Various trade names– Foliar spray
- * 2,4-D acid 300 g/L – Affray 300® – Foliar spray
- * Calcium dodecyl benzene sulfonate 300g/L - Immerse®

Biological Control: The weevil *Neohydronomus affinus*, have been introduced for bio control in Australia. The life cycle of the weevil takes about three months. Eggs are laid in the fleshy leaves and the larvae tunnel through the plant tissue. The openings assist the entry of fungi and bacteria, causing the tissue to rot. Biological control is most effective on large infestations, but it may take many years to achieve satisfactory control if used in isolation from other methods. To establish an effective breeding population of biological control agents, infested plants should be placed in an area where the water lettuce is concentrated.

Mechanical / Physical removal: Physical removal is effective for small infestations. Water lettuce plants cannot survive for long out of the water and can be removed by either raking or being pulled to the bank with an encircling rope. Once removed, plants must be allowed to dry out and break down.

Description:

Perennial stoloniferous aquatic herb to 20 cm above water level with feathery roots.

Leaves: Leaves wedge-shaped, pale green, buoyant towards base, to 15 cm long and to 8 cm wide.

Flowers: Small and partly concealed at the base of the plant. Flowers on a column surrounded by a whitish slit funnel-shaped bract (spathe).

Roots: A large number of unbranched feathery roots up to 80 cm long are submersed in water beneath the leaves of the plant.

Dispersal: By seed and vegetatively by daughter plants at the end of stolons. Seeds, seedlings and mature plants are moved by water and wind.

Habitats: Water lettuce grows best on still or slow moving bodies of fresh water such as farm dams, reservoirs, lakes, rivers and creeks. It will tolerate temperatures between 15°C and 35°C; however optimum temperatures for growth range between 22°C and 30°C. Water lettuce is frost sensitive and growth is limited in temperate zones by long cool winters. Water lettuce can survive for long periods on mud banks or in other damp locations such as roadside culverts.

For further information:

Noxious Weeds Office , Lilypool Road, SOUTH GRAFTON NSW 2460 Phone: 6643 3820

Helpful websites - www.clarence.nsw.gov.au - www.northcoastweeds.org.au - www.weeds.org.au



Photo 1: Water lettuce resembles and open head of lettuce (DEPT I & I)



Photo 2: Water lettuce can quickly multiply and cover an entire body of water(DEPT I & I)

Disclaimer: The advice provided in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Always read the label before using any of the products mentioned. Clarence Valley Council and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence, which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.