

Agriculture Protection Board
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ELODEA



This plant has the potential to obstruct irrigation channels, freshwater lakes and river systems. It is a declared plant (noxious weed) and may not be imported or kept in Western Australia. *(continued overleaf)*

Photo Credit: NSW Water Resources Commission.

ELODEA

Elodea (*Elodea canadensis* Michx.) is an extremely damaging weed of the world's waterways.

It is one of the most persistent and obstructive of all aquatic plants, infesting irrigation supply and drainage channels, small lakes and reservoirs. Elodea is a native of North America. It was introduced into Western Australia as an aquarium plant. Elodea is a declared plant (noxious weed) in Western Australia. It cannot be imported into the State or kept here and all plants present must be destroyed. This is best done by drying out and burning the plants.

Description:

Elodea is a perennial aquatic plant which grows completely submerged in water. It thrives in water varying from 30 cm to 3 m in depth. Its soft, green curled leaves grow in groups

of three, spaced at intervals of 3 to 25 mm along the stem, becoming closer together at the tips.

The stems are frequently branched and a single plant can be up to 3 metres in length. Elodea normally has roots, but pieces of the plant will continue to grow while floating unattached in the water.

Elodea spreads almost entirely by vegetative reproduction. In autumn new plants grow from pieces of stem, which readily take root under suitable conditions. The plant also reproduces by forming buds on segments of the stem in the autumn. These small, pointed buds remain dormant through the winter, then grow rapidly when the weather warms up in spring.

Elodea flowers in the summer. Male and female flowers grow on separate plants, but reproduction by this

means is limited because very few female flowers are produced.

Elodea can be confused with *Hydrilla verticillata*, another aquatic plant which is widespread in southern Australia. Hydrilla can be differentiated from Elodea by looking carefully at the number of leaves. The leaves of Hydrilla grow in groups of up to eight, whereas the leaves of Elodea are in groups of three.

Urgent action is essential to eradicate isolated patches of Elodea to prevent the weed getting established.

Suspect plants should be reported to the Agriculture Protection Board, telephone number PERTH (09) 367 0111 or any country officer of the Agriculture Protection Board or the Department of Agriculture.