

Agriculture Protection Board  
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# ALLIGATOR WEED



Photo Credit: NSW Water Resources Commission.

# ALLIGATOR WEED

**A**lligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides* (Mart.) Griseb.) is a potentially troublesome weed of waterways in Western Australia. When established it forms a dense mat of interwoven stems near the surface of the water, and can spread up to fifteen metres onto adjoining land. The mass of vegetation crowds out most other plants, making Alligator weed a serious weed in irrigation channels and swamps. Alligator weed is a native of South America. It 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:**

Alligator weed is a floating perennial aquatic plant, which can also grow on land.

The leaves have conspicuous veins radiating from a central nerve. The leaves grow opposite each other directly from joints on the hollow, greenish-brown stems.

Fibrous roots which are also produced at the stem joints, hang in the water, or in shallow water, grow into the soil.

Alligator weed spreads almost entirely by vegetative reproduction. Each joint on the stem can develop

into a new plant.

White flowers are produced during summer. However, Alligator weed does not appear to produce viable seed.

*Urgent action is essential to eradicate isolated patches of Alligator weed, to prevent the weed getting established in Western Australia. Suspect plants should be reported to the Agriculture Protection Board, telephone PERTH (09) 367 0111 or any country officer of the Agriculture Protection Board or Department of Agriculture.*