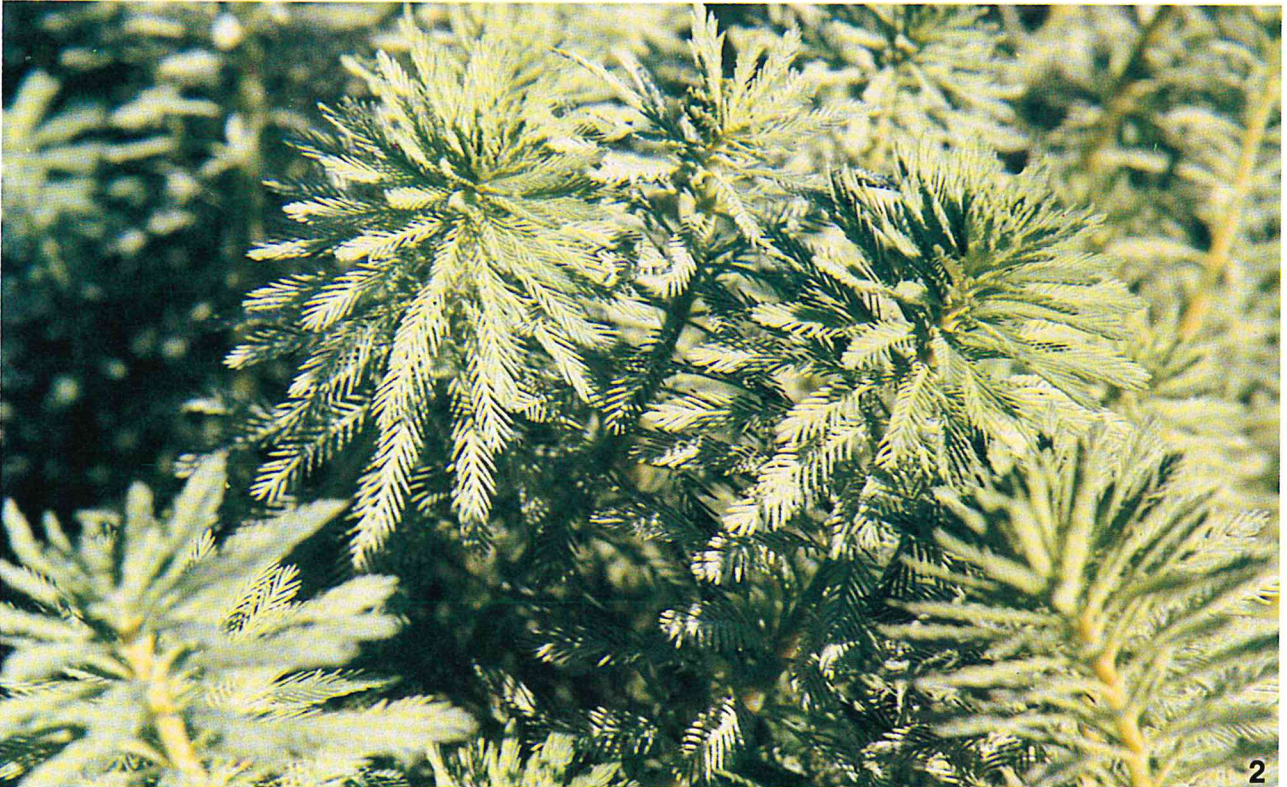


Agriculture Protection Board
Advisory Leaflet No. 85
June 1982
Agdex No. 647
18918/4/82-10M-L/3216

PARROT'S FEATHER



1. Infestation 2. Mature Plant

PARROT'S FEATHER

(continued)

PARROT's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) also known as Brazilian water milfoil is an introduced aquatic weed. It is a declared plant (noxious weed) in Western Australia.

A native of South America, Parrot's feather has since spread to Africa, Asia and Australia, probably as an escaped aquarium plant.

Significance:

Parrot's feather is a threat to irrigation systems. Stems break off during storms forming dense mats of vegetation which dam waterways and block irrigation pumps and water metering equipment.

The mats interfere with the use of lakes and rivers for recreation and they provide an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

In addition, Parrot's feather is

likely to compete with native wetland plants and to change the environment to the disadvantage of native plants and animals.

Description:

Parrot's feather is a rooted aquatic plant. It has stems up to two metres long which form a tangled mass in the water. Where it emerges above the surface the stems are erect, about 10 to 40cm long and bear whorls of four to six pale green leaves. Each leaf is feather-like and about two to four cm long. It does not form flowers outside South America.

Ecology:

Parrot's feather grows in slowly moving water on and near the banks of rivers and in the mud of shallow ponds.

Reproduction in Australia is entirely

vegetative. The stems are brittle and break off easily. When they settle in mud they regenerate new plants. New infestations are often caused by people dumping aquarium plants at tips or in waterways. Unwanted aquarium plants should be dried and burnt. New plants should be obtained only from accredited suppliers.

It is important to prevent Parrot's feather spreading further and to destroy existing infestations before they cause serious damage to agriculture or to the environment.

For information on Parrot's feather recognition and control, contact the Agriculture Protection Board, Jarrah Road, South Perth, W.A. 6151. Telephone (09) 367 0111 or any country office of the APB or the Department of Agriculture.