

Alligator weed

Alternanthera philoxeroides

Control of alligator weed is funded, and carried out, by Bay of Plenty Regional Council. We would like members of the public to let us know of any possible sightings of this plant.

Description

One of the world's most damaging weeds. A sprawling perennial aquatic or semi aquatic plant. Occasionally found in very dry sites

Dies back in winter.

Leaves: Opposite, stalkless, elliptical, hairless, 5-10cm long with distinct midrib.

Stems: Soft hollow floating stems, often reddish. Emerging up to 1m high in water.

Flowers: Single white clover-like flowerheads in summer.

Roots: Very deep. Roots also form at the nodes of stems.

Note: *Stems and leaves are much smaller, rounder and more compact when growing in grazed pasture.*

Origin

South America. Arrived in NZ in ballast water in ships.

Where is it found?

Often in slow moving streams, drains, estuaries and their banks.

Will also grow in relatively dry pasture or arable land.

Also found in new subdivisions where it arrives on machinery.

Currently (2014) in the Bay of Plenty, alligator weed is found at a number of known sites in the western bay, around Tauranga and in the Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki Districts. It is being actively controlled at all these sites.

How does it spread?

By stems spreading across water or land and re-rooting.

By small fragments of plant moved by water or agricultural machinery.

Why is it a problem?

- Forms dense floating mats on waterbodies, interfering with flow and ecology.
- Can eventually dominate pasture especially in low lying damp areas.
- Very difficult to control because of its extremely deep root system.
- While it is toxic to stock, it is generally grazed by them.

Status as a pest plant in the Bay of Plenty

Alligator weed is an Exclusion and Eradication Pest Plant in the Bay of Plenty Regional Pest Management Plan.

It is an offence under the Biosecurity Act to propagate, sell, distribute, release or spread alligator weed in the Bay of Plenty.

Control of alligator weed is funded, and carried out, by Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

Machinery or equipment must be cleaned prior to leaving a site contaminated with alligator weed.



How do I get rid of it?

Please don't try, it is very difficult!

If you think you have found this plant, please let us know.

Staff will always follow up possible finds of this plant and if confirmed we will work with you to control it.

Call us on 0800 STOP PESTS (0800 780 773).

Or email us at info@boprc.govt.nz



ERADICATION/EXCLUSION PEST



Alligator weed flower. Note the long flower stem emerging from the leaf axil



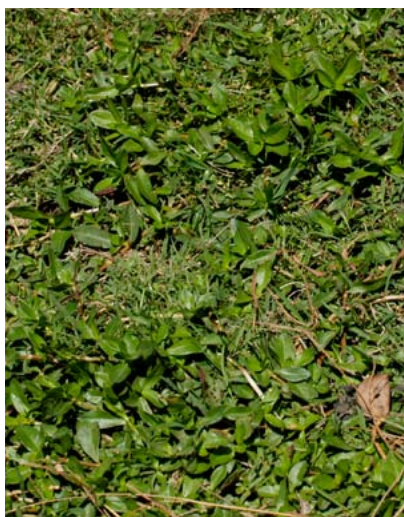
Alligator growing in pasture



Alligator weed emerging from old roots in cultivated maize paddock



Alligator weed is often found growing on the margins of ponds or slow moving waterways



Alligator weed in heavily grazed paddock. Note its creeping form



Alligator weed growing in water. Note the red stems