

Alligator weed

Alternanthera philoxeroides

Detect this pest plant before it becomes a problem

Why it's a problem:

Alligator weed is a serious threat to the environment and agriculture due to its aggressive and hardy nature.

- It reduces farmland and crops.
- It causes flooding and sediment build up by restricting water flow.
- Native species are threatened as it takes up light, nutrients and space.
- Extremely tough weed to control once established.
- Broken off parts of stems can grow roots and form new plants.

Appearance:

- Grows up to one metre tall around the edges of salt or fresh water.
- Dark green, waxy leaves arranged opposite on stems.
- White, papery flowers that form a ball-shape and grow at the top of the stem.
- Fibrous roots that form thick spreading mats.
- Hollow stems that vary from green to red.

Location:

Streams, farmland, drains, ponds, wetland and lake edges. It can also float on the surface of water and form rafts.

Get more information:

- [Weedbusters](#) provides descriptions and images to help with pest identification.
- [Agpest](#) is an identification tool for pests, biology, impact and management for farmers and agricultural professionals.
- [iNaturalist](#) is a sharing tool that contributes to biodiversity science for avid nature observers.
- Manaaki Whenua – [Landcare Research](#) provides information on weeds and biocontrol
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) (MPI) for information on protecting New Zealand from biological risk.
- Practice [biosecurity hygiene](#) to stop the spreading of pests.

