

Lagarosiphon (Oxygen Weed)

Lagarosiphon major

Notify Council

We would like to know if you've come across any lagarosiphon in our major rivers and lakes. Please report any sightings to Environment Southland.

What does it look like?

Oxygen weed, lagarosiphon, is an aquatic plant that is a submerged, bottom-rooting perennial that grows up to 5 metres tall. The spirally arranged leaves (16 x 2mm) have minute serrations along the edges, and are curled downwards towards the stem. Tiny pinkish flowers are produced, however no seed is set. This is due to only female plants being found in New Zealand.

Why is it a problem?

It grows rapidly in moderate to well-lit submerged sites and can withstand significant temperature ranges. Oxygen weed grows tall, long-lived and dense canopies that smothers smaller native species. There is a lack of native plant competitors of similar height in New Zealand. Stems are easily broken by water movement and aquatic life, and fragments root wherever they touch the river or lake bed.



Lagarosiphon (Oxygen Weed)

Lagarosiphon major



Control methods

Freshwater weeds are difficult to eradicate once established, but are possible to control. Before you start thoroughly check the waterway's adjacent areas and inflows to see if the infestation has spread.

As most aquatic weeds grow from fragments, start control at the upstream end of the infestation. In narrow waterways you can reduce the growth of aquatic weeds with riparian planting to reduce light levels.

Physical control (small infestations)

- Remove the weeds by digging and raking them up. Dispose of them on land so they dry up and die. Follow up regularly to remove growth.
- Bottom lining (small ponds): If possible, lower the water level and cover the infestation with black polythene or weedmat (weighted down) for about three months.

Biological control

- Grass carp can be used as a weed control agent in some cases. This requires a permit - contact the Department of Conservation for more information.

Herbicide control (large infestations)

- These are available for some freshwater weeds, and can be an effective control option. Check with your local council's biosecurity team before spraying, as spraying in or over water may require resource consent.

CAUTION: When using herbicide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY and follow ALL instructions and safety requirements.

Related links

Ministry for Primary Industries <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/oxygen-weed>

Weedbusters <http://www.weedbusters.org.nz/weed-information/lagarosiphon-major/59/>

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=3356

NZ Flora <http://www.nzflora.info/factsheet/Taxon/Lagarosiphon-major.html>

Unwanted Organisms Register <http://apps.mpi.govt.nz/applications/nzpests-view/Article/622/Oxygen-weed>

Summary of rules

No person can sell, propagate, breed, distribute or otherwise spread any Lagarosiphon (Oxygen Weed).

For full rules please see Sections 52 and 53 of the [Biosecurity Act 1993](#).

If you detect or suspect the presence of lagarosiphon outside of the lagarosiphon containment area (see map), you must immediately report it to Environment Southland.

For full rules please see the [Southland Regional Pest Management Plan](#) (Rule 8).

Management programme

Progressive containment

Request info

<https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityRFS/step/1?Subject=PlantPests&Species=223>

Report this Pest/Weed

<https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityIncident/step/1?Subject=PlantPests&Species=223>