

# Alligator weed

## *Alternanthera philoxeroides*

Alligator weed is declared a Class A (to be eradicated) and Class C (not to be introduced) weed in the Northern Territory and is a Weed of National Significance in Australia.

Alligator weed is a declared weed in accordance with the *Weeds Management Act*.

Alligator weed poses a major threat to the Northern Territory. It can grow from a very small fragment of stem which can easily escape into creeks and waterways.

This weed has the potential to become a very serious threat to agriculture and the environment and is difficult to control.

### HABIT



Alligator weed is a perennial herb. There are different forms of this plant which grow on land and in water.

Aquatic forms may be free-floating, or rooted and emergent from the water surface. Plants in aquatic situations have larger, darker leaves, thicker stems with larger air spaces and grow more vigorously.

### STEMS & BRANCHES



Stems are either prostrate or ascending and hollow especially when growing in water.

Stems that grow at the surface are mostly hairless, forming roots at the nodes (stoloniferous).

Underground stems produce roots and shoots (rhizomatous).

### LEAVES



Leaves without stalks, dark green, smooth, waxy, 2 - 7cm long, 5 - 40mm wide, narrowing at the tip; in pairs opposite each other on the main stems. Veins originating from the central rib are easily visible beneath the waxy leaf surface.

### FLOWERS



Silvery white flowers, in heads 1.2 - 1.4cm in diameter on stalks 2 - 7cm long growing from between leaves and main stems; produced from January to March.

### REPRODUCTION



Viable seed not recorded in Australia. Spread by pieces of mud attached to machinery, in turf and by flood.

Seeds are smooth and elliptical in shape.

The fruit is a flattened brownish bladder.

Weed Management Officers from the Weed Management Branch can provide advice on all aspects of weed management including control techniques, biological control, legislative responsibilities, policy advice, monitoring and reporting and regional planning. For further information on weed management planning, integrated control, herbicide application techniques and monitoring please refer to the [NT Weed Management Handbook](#).