

# ALLIGATOR WEED NOT A VEGETABLE

## **Alligator weed - not a vegetable**

Alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) is an aggressive noxious plant that invades Australia's waterways, wetlands and floodplains. A native to South America, alligator weed is a very difficult weed to manage and detect as it can grow in water and on land.

Infestations of alligator weed have been identified and treated in creeks, lakes, ponds and gardens in the Canberra region. This plant has most likely been spread by plant material from gardens being washed down stormwater drains into our waterways.

**Alligator weed is a prohibited and notifiable plant under ACT legislation. It is also listed as a Weed of National Significance.**

ALLIGATOR WEED



BOB TROUNCE



MUKUNUWENNA

## **Do not mistake it for Mukunuwenna**

Alligator weed can be easily mistaken for the Asian vegetable, mukunuwenna (*Alternanthera sessilis*). Alligator weed is not a vegetable and should not be eaten, transported or grown anywhere in Australia.

To tell the difference between alligator weed and mukunuwenna, look at the flowers. Alligator weed flowers are at least 10 mm across and are found on a short stalk. The stems are hollow and for plants growing on land their stems can have a reddish colour and extensive underground root system. The mukunuwenna flower is smaller (less than 5 mm across) and is found in clusters all along the stem where the leaf joins the stem. The Mukunuwenna stem is woody and solid, rather than soft and hollow.

*Alligator weed can grow on land*



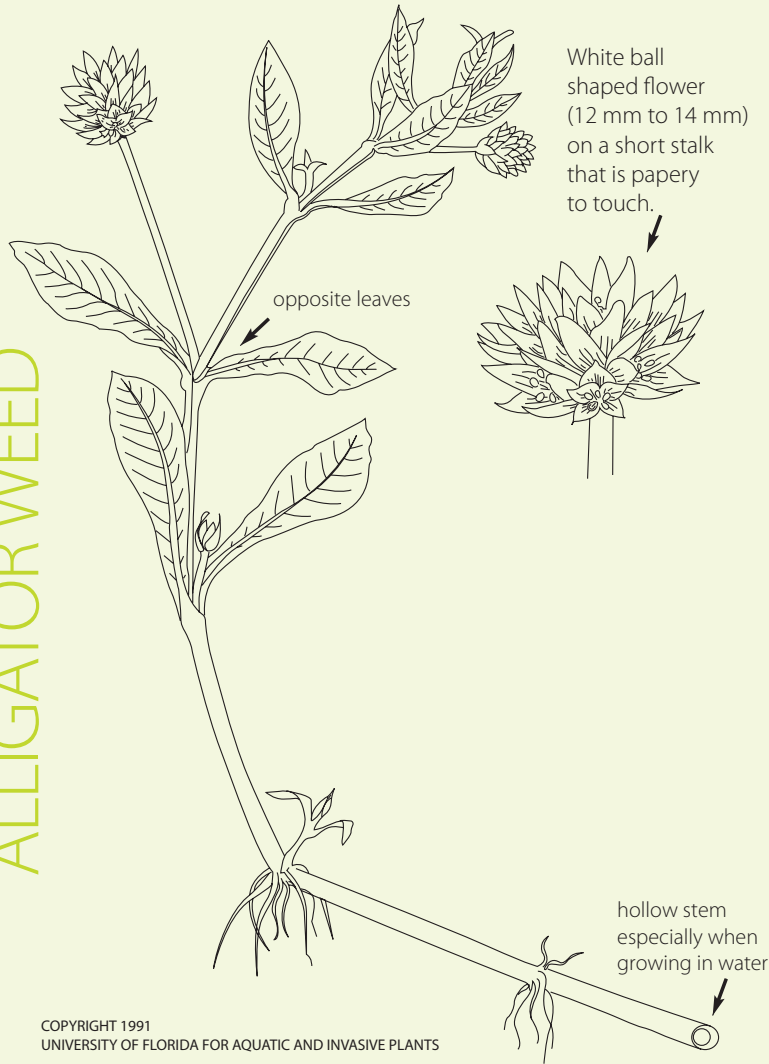
REBECCA COVENTRY



GRAHAM PRICHARD

Alligator weed plant material can be transferred from gardens and establish in waterways

ALLIGATOR WEED



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### Health fears

Health experts believe that extended use of alligator weed in food dishes could lead to serious health concerns.

### Environmental dangers

**Alligator weed:**

- blocks water storage facilities, waterways and wetlands, preventing use by birds and other wildlife
- depletes oxygen levels and restricts light penetration in the water, affecting fish and other aquatic life
- crowds out native aquatic plants
- interferes with water based recreational activities.

Alligator weed can be grown in backyards by mistake



LALITH GUNASEKERA, DPI-VICTORIA.

## YOU CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD

If you suspect you have Alligator weed growing in your garden, have seen it on public land or for sale, please send a photo and / or an accurate location description to Fix My Street on the TCCS website at [www.act.gov.au/fixmystreet](http://www.act.gov.au/fixmystreet). Alternatively, report any sightings to **Access Canberra on 13 22 81**. An inspector will confirm its identity and control it free of charge to residents.



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