



Hygrophila *Hygrophila costata* ACANTHACEAE

*Grows prolifically
*Spreads rapidly

*Chokes waterways and wetlands
*Displaces native plants and animals

Description

Hygrophila is a semi aquatic shrub that infests wetlands and the edges of waterbodies. It is native to South America, being found from Mexico to Argentina. Pairs of hairy leaves up to 15cm long cover angular purplish stems growing 1.5 metres tall. Leaves have a pointed tip and obvious mid vein. Stems branch at the base of the plant but rarely branch higher up. Propagation is either by seeds or branches which can take root when they contact soil or water. Seed capsules are small and inconspicuous. Seeds are <1mm in size and dispersed by wind, water, human activity, birds and other animals. It is not known how long seeds remain viable. Hygrophila is sometimes known as Glush Weed. Several species are sold for aquarium use.



Hygrophila costata habit, flowerbuds and shoot (inset).

REPORT ALL SUSPECTED OCCURRENCES TO THE WEEDS OFFICER AT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

Control methods

Mechanical Hygrophila can be controlled by removal, however this may not be desirable due to damage done to aquatic ecosystems caused by mechanical removal. Hand removal of isolated plants is beneficial if they are disposed of carefully.

Herbicide control. Glyphosate based herbicides are effective but before proceeding with herbicide applications you should contact the nearest EPA regional office and request information concerning the use of herbicides near water.

Cultural control Planting of trees reduces the growth of Hygrophila by providing shade and competition. Reduce nutrient inputs into waterways and monitor sites for new plants. Prevent animal, human and machine access into infested areas to avoid seed spread and site disturbance. Do not buy Hygrophila plants.

Disposal Correct disposal is essential to prevent further spread. All plants should be carefully handled and bagged then placed into the domestic garbage. Contact council for further advise on disposing of this plant or contaminated soil.

Biological Control There are no bioagents available nor is it likely any will be introduced. Grazing is unlikely to assist in eradicating infestations.

For further information please contact the Weeds or Vegetation Officer your local Council

The information contained in this document is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of revision (September 2004). Persons are reminded of the need to ensure that any product purchased for the control of *Hygrophila costata* is lawful for that purpose. Written by Graham Prichard 092004. ©

NEVER PLACE UNWANTED PLANTS IN WATERWAYS, BUSHLAND OR RESERVES