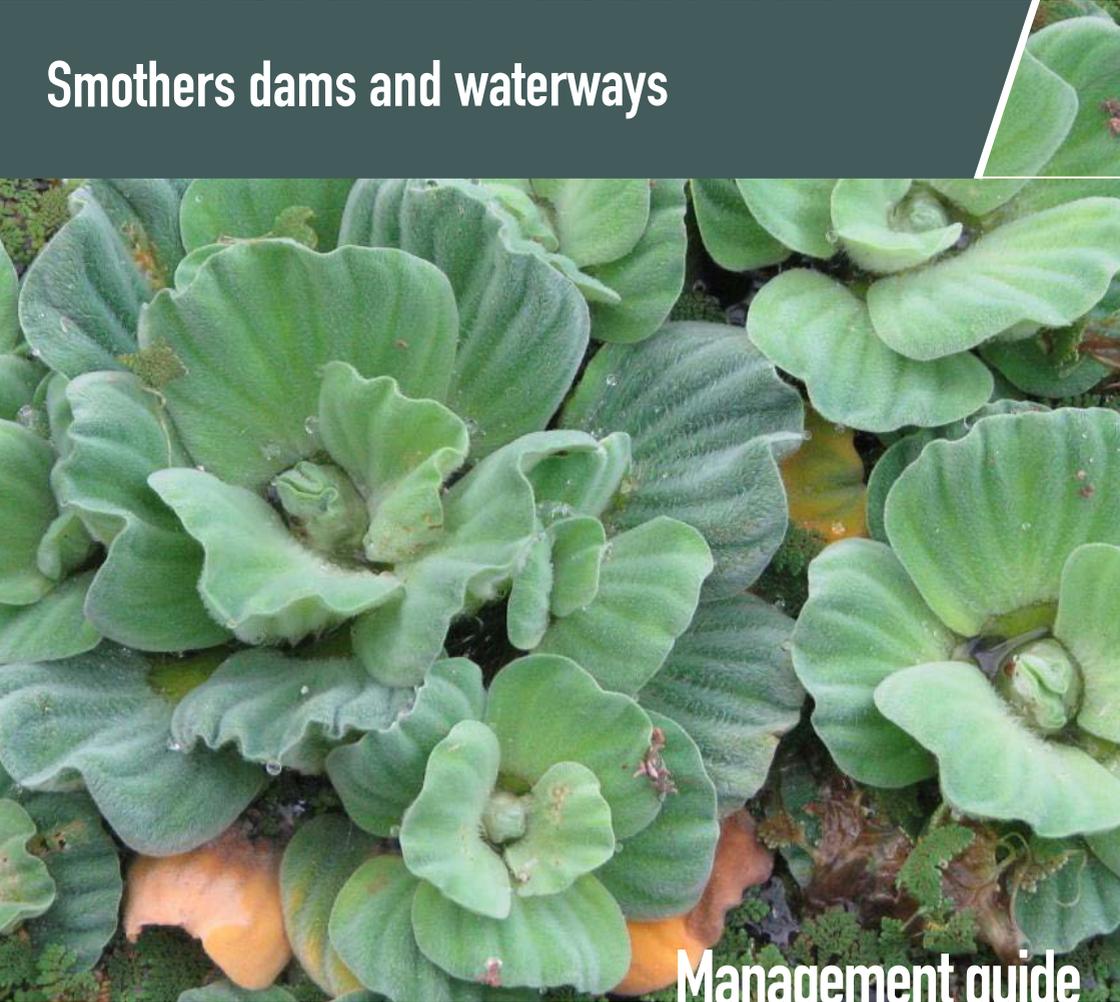


Hunter Region Priority Weed

# Water lettuce

Smothers dams and waterways



Management guide



In NSW, weeds are regulated by the *NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015*. All land managers have a **General Biosecurity Duty** to contain the spread of weeds.

**“General Biosecurity Duty means that any person dealing with plant matter must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable).”**

**The Regional priority for Water lettuce is to eradicate the weed within the Region. In order to achieve this Land Managers are asked to:**

Mitigate the risk of new weeds being introduced to their land. The plant should be eradicated from the land and the land kept free of the plant. The plant should not be bought, sold, grown, carried or released into the environment. Notify local control authority if found.

For further information contact your local Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer via [Hunter Regional Weeds](#) or visit [NSW WeedWise](#).

## Impacts

Water lettuce is a free floating aquatic plant with the potential to quickly spread and form a dense mat that can cover an entire body of water.

- These dense mats can have negative impacts on native aquatic plants and animals.
- They can also interfere with irrigation, boating and water sport activities.
- Rivers, wetlands, lakes, reservoirs and slow moving streams are most at risk from this weed.
- Thick mats of water lettuce are also known to harbour mosquitoes.
- Water lettuce is a perennial plant that reproduces vegetatively and from seed.
- Each plant produces a number of stolons, with each producing a new rosette or daughter plant at its end.
- Water lettuce is dispersed as broken pieces, buoyant seedlings or whole plants.

## Management

To successfully eradicate Water lettuce in the Hunter Region the public must be vigilant.

- Report sightings to your local Weeds Officer.
- Physical removal is effective for small infestations. Water lettuce plants cannot survive for long out of the water. Once removed, plants must be allowed to dry out and break down. Make sure that all plants removed are placed above the flood line. If possible, place on plastic to prevent them from taking root in mud.
- Herbicide may be necessary to control large infestations of water lettuce.
- If using an area for recreational water sports, prior to leaving, check equipment for Water lettuce and remove it.
- Dispose of unwanted aquarium or fish pond plants safely – remove and dry out completely before wrapping in paper and disposing in the bin.
- Report sales or advertisements in nurseries, pet shops or online of “Water Rose” to your local Weeds Officer.

# Identification



Often sold in nurseries and pet shops as "Water Rose", Water lettuce leaves have a velvety appearance. *Photo: B Warboys*



Water lettuce plants resemble open heads of lettuce. *Photo: T Bignell*



Water lettuce invades slow moving fresh water. *Photo: C Mifsud*



Water lettuce forms dense mats over the water surface. *Photo: T Bignell*



Whitish-green flowers are hidden in the centre of the plant at the base of the ribbed leaves. *Photo: C Mifsud*

# Management Calendar

The calendar below outlines the management approach for a typical year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Growth stage	Seeds germinate in early summer once temperatures rise above 20°C and then float to the surface as seedlings.											
	Flowering and reproduction can occur as early as the four- to five-leaf stage of development. When conditions for growth are good, the plant can quickly reproduce and cover an entire body of water with a thick mat of connected rosettes.											
Action	Best time for herbicide control									Best time for herbicide control		
	Mechanical or physical control may be undertaken at any time.											

Recommended control options may vary according to your area. There are experienced professional Biosecurity (Weeds) Officers based in each Local Government Area who have local knowledge and can provide expert advice for your weed management situation. Contact your expert Biosecurity (Weeds) Officer at your local Council or at **Hunter Regional Weeds**.

Herbicide control options for all areas in NSW, including current herbicide registrations, are available for Water lettuce at **NSW WeedWise**.

*Remember that all herbicide must be used and handled in accordance with the label or permit.*

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Waterlettuce>



Get the WeedWise app

## Further information

For further information on how to meet your General Biosecurity Duty on your property, your best source is the expert Weeds Officer at your local Council or via Hunter Regional Weeds.

**Contact Hunter Regional Weeds**

[www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au](http://www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au)

**Hunter Local Land Services**

[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/hunter)

**NSW Weed Wise**

[www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

