

Lagarosiphon

Lagarosiphon major

Family Hydrocharitaceae



Identification

- Commonly known as oxygen weed.
- Fast-growing, submerged, freshwater species.
- Downward curling leaves are arranged spirally on the stem.
- The leaves are 6-20 mm long and attached to very brittle stems.
- Grows in sandy or silty substrates.



Lagarosiphon. Photo: S. Charteris (DOC)



Lagarosiphon. A. Paltridge (DOC)

Where is it found?

Lagarosiphon is found scattered around the South Island. It can be found growing in lakes, drains, slow-moving rivers, garden ponds, and aquariums.

Lagarosiphon is known to be found in a few waterways within Canterbury. It is also found in Lake Benmore and in private garden ponds and aquariums.

Why is it a problem?

Fast-growing Lagarosiphon forms dense mats of vegetation, displacing native aquatic plants. It also alters the nutrient status of lakes, blocks waterways and affects the recreational use of water bodies.

Lagarosiphon can be transported from one waterway to another when stem fragments become attached to boats, trailers, fishing equipment and eel/fish nets.

Status

Lagarosiphon major has been declared an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993, which makes it illegal to knowingly release or spread, display or sell, breed, propagate or otherwise distribute this species.

Similar species

Lagarosiphon looks very similar to elodea/Canadian pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*) and egeria (*Egeria densa*). To differentiate, elodea has leaves arranged in whorls of three around the stem. Egeria has larger leaves that are arranged in whorls of at least four around the stem. Lagarosiphon has downward curling leaves arranged spirally around the stem.



Egeria (on the left) and elodea (on the right). Photo: K. McCombs