

SPECIES: *ALTERNANTHERA PHILOXEROIDES*

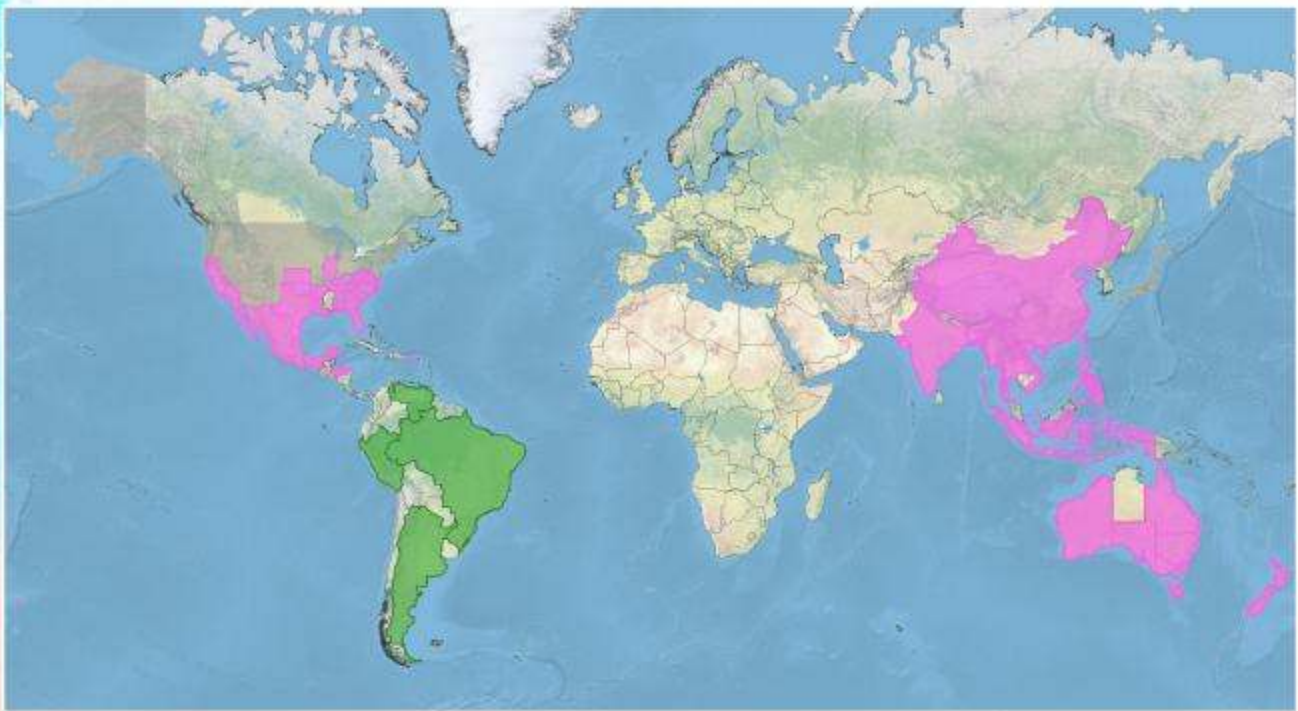
COMMON NAME: ALLIGATOR WEED

FAMILY: AMARANTHACEAE

Plant Description

A perennial herb that can grow in both aquatic and terrestrial environments. The plant has fleshy succulent and hollow stems. The leaves are smooth, narrowly ovate and pointed at the ends. Fruiting and flowering occurs throughout the year. The flowers are small, papery, and white, and found at the ends of the stems. The plant has a high reproductive potential, being able to reproduce vegetatively from small fragments.





CABI, 2022. *Alternanthera philoxeroides*. In: Invasive Species Compendium. Wallingford, UK: CAB International. <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/4403#toDistributionMaps> [accessed: 25/01/2022]

■ Introduced
■ Native
■ Origin not recorded

***Alternanthera philoxeroides* AMARANTHACEAE**

Origin: South America

Introduction: It is thought to have been unintentionally introduced to India in the 1940s in cargo packaging material (as inferred from the first reported occurrences of the species from water bodies close to an airport in West Bengal).

Impacts: Though primarily a tropical plant, owing to its potential to withstand low temperatures it has become invasive in temperate regions too. The plant forms dense mats on the surface of the water, competing with other aquatic plants. Water quality is degraded due to increased biomass decomposition. It also reduces light penetration and gaseous exchange, affecting habitat for aquatic fauna. It interferes with water flow, affecting irrigation, and the dense vegetation mats obstruct navigation, and make fishing difficult affecting livelihoods of fisherfolk. The mats formed on the water surface also provide habitat for mosquitoes, and thus promote mosquito-borne diseases.

Management: Mechanical control is followed, but is costly. Small fragments remaining can form mats again very quickly.