

Sagittaria platyphylla



THE FACTS

Origin	North America
Height	150 cm
Distinguishing Features	Large flowers, spoon shaped leaves with only one main mid vein
Leaves	Emergent leaves: oval shaped with a pointed tip; to 25 cm long and 10 cm wide. Submerged leaves: long, narrow strap like without expanded blades; to 50 cm long
Stems	Triangular in cross section; to 75 cm long, long petioles
Inflorescence	Appears in whorls. Male flowers: 3 white petals with yellow centre. Female flower: no petals; looks like flattened green berries. Flowers appear below the height of the leaves during warmer months
Fruit/Seed	Cluster 0.5-1.0 cm across. 1 seeded segment flattened and winged 1.5 – 3 mm long. Each plant can produce up to 20,000 seeds.

Sagittaria platyphylla (also known as *Sagittaria graminea*) is an aquatic plant that is having a huge agricultural and environmental impact in southern New South Wales and northern Victoria. It has an aggressive growth habit and spreads rapidly, blocking irrigation channels and consequently impeding water flow. It has a detrimental impact on the environment with the potential to choke out watercourses and wetlands, adversely affecting biodiversity.



The Murrumbidgee, Darling and Lachlan Rivers are at high risk if current infestations are not contained. Once in these rivers *Sagittaria* will spread rapidly throughout irrigation areas - being pumped out of the river and introduced into local farm channels. Another concern is that this serious aquatic weed is still being sold despite being restricted from sale.

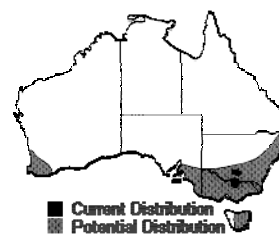
Declaration Status – *Sagittaria* is declared under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* as a Class 5 weed state-wide and a Class 4 weed in: Albury City, Balranald Shire, Carrathool Shire, Central Murray County, Corowa Shire, Greater Hume Shire, Griffith City, Hay Shire, Jerilderie Shire, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee Shire, Wakool Shire and Wentworth Shire Councils.

Class 4, Locally Controlled Weeds, the growth and spread of the plant must be controlled according to the measures specified in a management plan published by the local control authority.

Class 5, Restricted Plants, must not be sold, purchased or scattered.

Distribution of Infestation

Sagittaria is currently found along the Murray River from Howlong through to the Torrumbarry weir (600 sites have been recorded by Goulburn Murray Water). The majority of infestations are being treated at least twice per year. *Sagittaria* is also spreading along the Mulwala canal and is present on several properties within Central Murray County Council; isolated infestations have also been found in Wakool Shire.



It was first identified in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area in 1990. After seeing its impact in Victoria, Murrumbidgee Irrigation incorporated it into their weeds program almost immediately. 10 years on it has really started to take off infesting several irrigation channels in the Griffith area and an isolated channel in Carrathool shire.

Sagittaria is not easily controlled by either mechanical methods or by the herbicides registered for use in aquatic situations.

Sagittaria platyphylla



Habitat & Description

Sagittaria is an emergent, erect plant, up to one metre high when mature. It grows in a number of forms. The most recognisable form has lance or arrow shaped leaves which are a distinctive green colour. The next most prominent form has long, narrow strap like leaves. These are often more yellow in colour and can grow adjacent to or separate from the lance shaped plants. The least prominent form grows under water. Its leaves are also strap like but much shorter and grow in a rosette arrangement up to 50 cm long and almost flat against the soil.

Sagittaria is found along river and creek banks, lagoons, irrigation channels and drains, dams etc generally in water depths less than one metre.



Means of Spread

Sagittaria spreads rapidly, due to its many methods of reproduction. Not only does Sagittaria reproduce by the germination of seeds, it also uses several methods of vegetative reproduction. The plant has underground rhizomes (horizontal stems which put out both roots and shoots) which when detached from the plant can establish a new plant. It also has bulbs which remain viable in the soil for many years. Seed production occurs from September to May.

Sagittaria germinates from late winter to spring. Flowers appear from soon after establishment and can continue to May or June when the plants begin to be affected by the cold weather. Sagittaria may then continue to reproduce from rhizomes throughout the summer.

Control

Most importantly, do not dump unwanted aquatic plants into water bodies, or grow species with weed potential in ornamental ponds or aquaria, or in water bodies such as farm dams from which they might be spread by waterbirds. Do not plant anything into natural water bodies. Some invasive water plants are still sometimes sold by nurseries or pet shops.

If you suspect an infestation contact your local control authority (Council weed officer). They will be able to accurately identify and provide appropriate management options.

Photos: Melissa Freeman- NSW DPI, Golburn Murray Water

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