

Alligatorweed

Alternanthera philoxeroides

Description

First recorded in Alabama in 1897. Possibly introduced through ballast water.

Habit

Emergent or rooted woody floating plant. Plants have hollow stems and can grow up to 3 ft. (1 m) tall.

Leaves

Opposite, elliptical, pairs or whorls, thick but non-succulent. Up to 4 in. (10 cm) long.

Stems

Hollow, growing up to 3 ft. (1 m) tall. Stolons can reach a length of 10 m.

Flowers

White in color, clover-like heads in the axils of the leaves. Occur during the summer months.

Fruits and Seeds

Very small, single-seeded. Typically non-viable.

Habitat



Native to South America. Can be found in wet soils or shallow water growing out into waterways. Can also grow on land.

Reproduction

Vegetatively as seeds are rarely produced.

Similar

Marsh seedbox (*Ludwigia palustris*), Lake hygrophila (*Hygrophila costata*).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Mechanical removal can be costly and potentially cause fragments to regrow. Bio-control methods have been successful with the use of the alligatorweed flea beetle (*Agasicles hygrophila*).

Credits

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