

Senegal tea

Gymnocoronis spilanthoides

Detect this pest plant before it becomes a problem

Why it's a problem:

Senegal tea is an aggressive aquatic plant.

- It can block drainage channels, causing flooding, and can affect recreational activities and irrigation.
- It forms dense, floating mats that quickly cover waterways.
- It can exclude desirable native aquatic plants in these ecosystems, affecting native biodiversity.
- It spreads through both vegetative fragmentation and seed dispersal.
- Heavy infestations and the rotting of dead plants have been found to diminish the oxygen available to fish and other aquatic organisms.

Appearance:

Senegal tea is a hardy, semi-aquatic, perennial herb.

- It can grow up to 1.5m tall, with fine, fibrous roots.
- It has the ability to grow aurally from stem nodes.
- The stems are hollow and float and can take root at nodes, resulting in new plants easily forming from broken fragments.
- Leaves are dark green, slightly waxy, lance shaped, serrated and are paired with opposite stalks joined at the stem.
- Flowers are produced from November to April and are clover-like with many thin, white florets, followed by yellow-brown seeds.
- Senegal tea is dormant over winter and dies back to rootstock if chilled, but re-sprouts over spring.

Location:

Streams, pasture, drains, ponds, wetlands and lake margins.

Get more information:

- [Weedbusters](#) provides descriptions and images to help with pest identification.
- [Agpest](#) is an identification tool for pests, biology, impact and management for farmers and agricultural professionals.
- [iNaturalist](#) is a sharing tool that contributes to biodiversity science for avid nature observers.
- Manaaki Whenua – [Landcare Research](#) provides information on weeds and biocontrol
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) (MPI) for information on protecting New Zealand from biological risk.
- Practice [biosecurity hygiene](#) to stop the spreading of pests.

