

## PLANT PEST CONTROL

### AQUATIC PLANT PESTS

#### Hornwort (Coontail): *Ceratophyllum demersum*

##### **Why are we worried?**

Hornwort can form a very dense canopy below the surface, and it can be driven by the wind against shorelines where it smothers and shades other vegetation. It is a serious problem in hydro-electric lakes where it is easily dislodged and can block penstock intake screens.

##### **What does it look like?**

- Hornwort grows completely submerged, with the base of its stem buried in sandy or silty sediments. It does not form roots, and because it is poorly attached, it can be moved by water currents or waves.
- The stems are buoyant, and can grow in water 10 metres deep. Hornwort can reach a height of five or six metres.
- Hornwort has 7 to 12 leaves in a whorl around each point on its stem. The leaves are green and between 1.5 cm and 4 cm long, forked and toothed on one side.
- The brittle stems fragment off, and this is the main way Hornwort spreads. Stem fragments sinking from the rafts of the Hornwort can establish in sediment.

##### **Where is it found?**

Hornwort can be found from Northland to Manawatu, and is still spreading. It is particularly

common in the Waikato River, Lake Rotorua and Lake Rotoiti. In Hawke's Bay, Hornwort is found in Lake Runanga, Te Pohue Lake, the Taipo Stream, the Tamatea and Karamu drain, and it is suspected to be in other drains.

##### **What's the best way to control the plant?**

Torpedo herbicide containing diquat in the form of a gel is recommended. The gel is sprayed onto the water and as it sinks it clings to the plant. The gel must be used in clear water, not in murky or muddy water. Label directions must be followed.

*Photo courtesy of NIWA*



**For further information**

If you think you may have this plant pest on your property, please contact the Biosecurity Plants Officers at Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice and we will work with you to eradicate it.

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