



Pond Check

Information & Management



CREEPING WATER PRIMROSE (*Ludwigia peploides/hexaploides/grandiflora*)



Photos: Environment Agency

Information

Creeping water primrose, native to South America, was introduced to Europe as an ornamental for its abundant, yellow flowers. This highly invasive perennial forms dense stands of vegetation along water margins that extend out over the water surface, creating floating mats. It is also capable of growing as a terrestrial plant should a water body dry out. It degrades habitat by out competing native vegetation to become the dominant species. The dense floating mats reduce light levels and can cause oxygen depletion. This can lead to a loss of native plants and wildlife in addition to the physical problems caused from clogging up waterways and drainage systems. Amenity and navigational access are seriously impeded. Reproduction is by seed and vegetative, with new plants also being able to generate from small stem fragments. Both can be dispersed by water flow, animal and human activity. Currently, only established on a few sites in Britain, creeping water primrose has potential to become a serious threat to the environment

and biodiversity. It is already having a negative impact in parts of France.

Ludwigia species have recently been added to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act making it illegal to cause them to grow in the wild.

Management

This plant should be removed and carefully disposed of.

Removal is more successful if carried out during the early stages of establishment and in doing so helps to retain more of the native flora.

Once creeping water primrose becomes well established it can be extremely difficult to control.

Where possible, it is advisable to section off the infestation with a fragment proof fence/ barrier to prevent wider spread of fragments when carrying out any maintenance that causes disturbance. Repeated control may be required but avoid carrying out pond maintenance during the breeding season for birds, fish amphibians and invertebrates.

Always inspect and clean equipment to prevent transferring material.

Manual

Removing this plant before it comes into flower is advisable to prevent seed dispersal.

When in flower, carefully remove the flower/seed heads before the rest of the plant to avoid dispersing seeds. Do this by placing a bag over the flower heads to catch the seeds before removing the heads. The rest of the plant can then be pulled out by hand. Seedlings can be removed easily however larger plants will re-root unless the embedded, long roots are removed. Closely monitor for re-growth, removing any new seedlings as they arise. Larger infestations may benefit from repeated cutting or dredging. Take care to remove all fragments as these can generate new plants.

Always ensure that nutrient levels are controlled to prevent excessive growth.

Shading with an opaque material such as thick black polythene or carpet for prolonged periods may be effective for small areas but be careful that this does not deplete the water of oxygen by only partially shading the pond.

Clean all equipment and machinery to avoid spreading seeds and fragments to other sites.

Chemical

Avoid the use of herbicides as they also target native species.

If necessary, only use products approved for use on or near water and always follow the product label.

Agreement must be obtained from the Environment Agency before herbicides are applied in, on or near controlled waters.

Disposal

Bagged flower/seed heads should be incinerated but other vegetation can be composted either on your own compost heap or via a civic amenity waste disposal site. A hot compost heap will destroy plant fragments but may not reach a temperature sufficient to destroy the seeds. The composting material should be covered to retain heat and prevent material inadvertently being distributed to the wider environment. Alternatively, place on a membrane, allow to dry and then burn. If you are concerned about removing wildlife with the vegetation make sure you rinse it off either by swilling it around the pond or in a separate bucket of pond water. You can leave the vegetation by the side of the pond to allow wildlife to re-enter but this should be transferred after a couple of days to prevent nutrients entering the pond.

DO	DON'T
Remove your invasive species	Dump in the countryside
Compost	Dispose of down the drain or in a watercourse
Burn	Transfer plants or animals between ponds
	Give surplus pond plant to friends

FURTHER GUIDENCE

www.nonnativespecies.org

[http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/GEHO0307BLZO-e-e\(1\).pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/GEHO0307BLZO-e-e(1).pdf)

http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sci_programmes/AquaticPlantManagement.html



visit: www.ercis.co.uk/pondcheck
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