

Cape water lily

Nymphaea caerulea ssp. zanzibarensis

Category R – Reduce populations.

The Problem

An African lily species that is now widely naturalised in coastal Eastern Australia and is regarded as an environmental weed in SE QLD and Northern NSW. It is widely grown and sold as a garden water plant however it has escaped cultivation and is now a common weed of natural slow-moving waterways, such as ponds, lakes, lagoons and wetlands. It has large leaves, reaching up to 40cm in diameter that outcompete and replace native aquatic lilies and other water plants.

Identifying Features

Emergent flowers that stand up to 30cm above the water's surface. Thin, pointed petals that range in colour from blue to pink.

Similar Looking Natives

Giant waterlily (*Nymphaea gigantea*) has larger leaves (up to 75cm diameter) and bigger (blue) flowers with slightly wider petals. Unfortunately now almost extinct in SE QLD.

How to remove it

Total removal – Remove the entire plant from the waterway by hand.

Herbicide spray – Cape water lily can be removed using certain herbicides but since this species grows in the water, this course of action should only be undertaken by a professional

Prevent the spread!

- Remove before plants flower and seed.
- Replace with native lilies such as the [Snowflake lily \(*Nymphoides indica*\)](#) or the [Giant waterlily \(*Nymphaea gigantea*\)](#).
- Opt for native water lilies in you garden ponds and dams.
- Notify your garden centre that they are contributing to the spread of an environmental weed.
- For more information on the Cape water lily, [click here](#).

WARNING – Herbicides contain hazardous chemicals. Incorrect use can cause injury and damage to the environment. Use with care and contact an expert for advice if unsure.


watergum
community for environment

