

Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)

Introduction

Salvinia is a free-floating water weed, native to South America that thrives in warmer weather forming dense mats of vegetation on water surfaces.

Salvinia is found in Australia and is listed as a Weed of National Significance and must not be imported into NSW, sold, bartered, exchanged or offered for sale.

How does Salvinia affect our waterways?

Salvinia can smother the surface of the water which can:

- prevent native water plants from growing
- reduce food and habitat for fish and other aquatic animals
- reduce water quality, causing stagnant water and unpleasant odours
- provide a breeding habitat for mosquitoes
- reduce or prevent the use of waterways for recreation or transport
- interfere with floodgates
- reduce the visual appeal of waterways.

What does Salvinia look like?

All species of salvinia are free-floating aquatic ferns, with small, spongy, green leaves positioned in pairs along a common stem.

The surface of each leaf is covered with long, stiff, water-repellent hairs.

When the plant matures, the leaves become thick and fold at the mid-rib.

The young leaves of salvinia are oval, about 12 mm wide, and lie flat on the water surface, often resembling duckweed.

A root trails from each pair of young leaves. As salvinia matures, its long filamentous roots resemble wet hair.

Image 1: Salvinia molesta



How does it spread?

Salvinia can spread by plant parts in two ways:

- Plant fragments - If a part of the stem containing a node breaks away from the main plant it can grow a new plant. One pair of leaves can start an entire new infestation.

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- Daughter plants - Mature plants produce buds at the join between sections of the stem and these develop to form daughter plants.

Salvinia spreads to new areas by:

- attaching to boats, trailers and vehicles
- human activities such as keeping it in fishponds, tanks or dams and inappropriate disposal of the plant
- attaching to animals such as water birds, turtles or cattle
- once in a waterway the plants can be spread by water flows especially floods and wind.

It only takes a small fragment of Salvinia moved around by birds or water flow to start a new infestation. In warm weather and with adequate nutrients, it can double its volume in less than three days.

Salvinia on the Central Coast

A large infestation of Salvinia was identified and removed on the Central Coast in 2015.

A large infestation of the weed was again identified in February 2024, in Wyong River near Wyong River Weir.

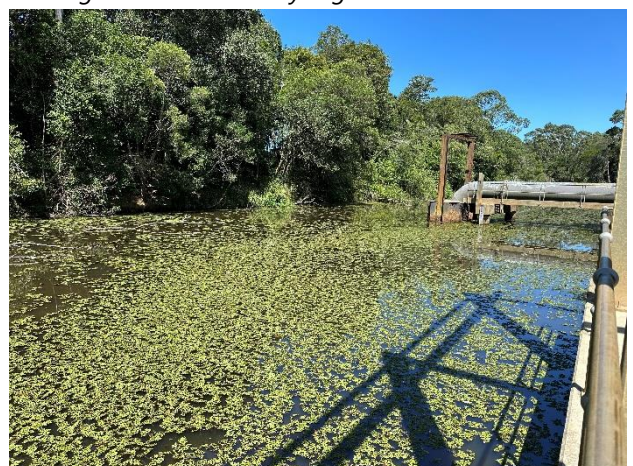
What is Council doing about the Salvinia outbreak?

As Crown Lands own Wyong River, Council is working with the NSW Government in the coordination of the removal Salvinia weed recently identified around the Wyong River Weir area.

The short-term solution involves installing weed booms to keep the weed in a designated place and mechanical removal, with a long-term solution including the introduction of Salvinia weed-eating weevils.

Council has increased water quality parameter sampling in Wyong River, monitoring for any changes in water quality levels and are working with the community to identify other locations the weed may appear, including private properties.

Image 2: Salvinia - Wyong River



Council is currently not pumping water from the Wyong River pump station. There is

Factsheet



Water
and Sewer

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currently no direct threat to the drinking water supply.

How can the community help?

The community can help stop the spread of Salvinia by:

- checking boats, kayaks, trailers and cars that have been used in our waterways for Salvinia after exiting and before entering a waterway
- ensuring Salvinia is not acquired for use in fishponds, tanks or dams and that if it is in use, ensure that it is removed and disposed of appropriately
- notifying Council of any further Salvinia outbreaks they have witnessed within the Central Coast Local Government Area.

Image 3: Thick covering of Salvinia



What to do if you have Salvinia

- ✓ If you have small quantities of Salvinia in your home fish tanks or ponds, place the weed in a bag and dispose of it in your red lid general waste bin.
- ✗ Never dispose of water, plants or animals from home aquariums and ponds within our local waterways or within your green lid garden vegetation bin.

If you have large quantities of Salvinia on your property or you have noticed it in local waterways, please contact Council on 02 4306 7900.

Related resources

Search '**Salvinia**' at weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Ask us a question

Please contact us at:

Phone: (02) 4306 7900 – 8:30-5:00pm

Online: Search '**customer help**' at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

Council Office: 2 Hely Street, PO Box 20, Wyong NSW 2259

Central Coast Council P: 02 4306 7900 W: centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

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