

# Parrots Feather

## *Myriophyllum aquaticum*

**Total Control Plant under the  
West Coast Regional Pest Plant  
Management Strategy**



**Suspected sightings of this Total Control Plant should be reported promptly to  
the West Coast Regional Council or DOC Conservancy Office, Hokitika**

### National Pest Plant Accord Status

Parrots Feather is listed in the 2008 National Pest Plant Accord and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand. For more information refer to the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand website at [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/nppa)

### Where has Parrots Feather come from?

Also known Brazilian Milfoil and Water Milfoil, Parrots Feathers is of South American origin. The plant now has spread throughout New Zealand to become a major aquatic pest plant. With just a few sites being known on the West Coast, eradication (total control) of this plant is being aimed for.



### What does Parrots Feather look like?

Parrots Feather is a distinct bluish-green coloured perennial herb which grows well in high sun, low flow environments where there is nutrient runoff from nearby pasture. The plant is bottom rooted with long, sturdy stems (up to 2m) which form floating mats.

Emergent leaves are pale bluish-green, feather-like and finely divided. Submerged leaves are often reddish and have many branched filaments. While the plant does have tiny female flowers set in the axils of aerial leaves, the plant spreads only vegetatively in New Zealand, i.e. from root fragments.

*Top right: Parrots Feather growing in a farm drain [WCRC]*

*Below left: Parrots Feather detail [MAF BNZ]*

### Why is Parrots Feather a Pest Plant?

Parrots Feather is a pest plant because it forms dense mats which impede water movement causing siltation and flooding in waterways where it has taken hold. The plants spreads easily as any pieces broken off and washed downstream will re-root and grow from nodes on the plant stems.

Its vigorous growth smothers other native aquatic plants and habitats used by aquatic animals, reducing or eliminating their presence. Parrots Feather is most commonly spread by flood events, boats and trailers, diggers, el nets and stock with access to infested waterways.

## What are the best methods of control?

Parrots Feather is extremely difficult to eradicate and any control method/ s used will require following up at regular intervals. Long term strategies such as fencing and planting of riparian margins to increase shade would be worthwhile.

### **Manual Methods**

Ensure you have identified the plant correctly then either:

- Rake up or dig out plant over summer (Nov—Jan) and leave somewhere sunny, well away from any wet areas or flood zones, to dry out and die. Emergent regrowth can then be sprayed (see below) during autumn (Feb—April). Placement of mesh or net downstream of the work area is advised for catching plant fragments and preventing them gaining a hold downstream OR
- Lay weedmat over the target area carefully to ensure any fragments don't escape, then leave for 3-4 months OR
- Combine the above, first reducing water flow by \*damming or diversion, remove plants mechanically and suppress re-growth using weedmat. Treat removed plants as above.

\* check with WCRC first as this may require a Resource Consent

### **Herbicide Methods**

Parrots Feather is best dealt with by the herbicide 'Garlon 360' (active ingredient Triclopr). This is also preferable to other herbicides for spraying over water.

An alternative is to spray the emergent stems 4 times over a 10 week period between spring and autumn using a glyphosate product at 2ml/1L water + penetrant.

NOTE: The spraying of herbicide over water for aquatic pest plant control is a permitted activity under Rule 66 of the Proposed Regional Land & Water Plan 2010, providing set conditions are met. For more for more information contact the West Coast Regional Council or view the plan at [www.wcrc.govt.nz](http://www.wcrc.govt.nz)

**For personal safety please use all herbicides as per manufacturer's labelling**

### **Biocontrols**

There are no known biocontrol agents for Parrots Feather at present.

## Where can I get more help?

For further information call either of the Regional Weedbusters Co-ordinators. They are:

**Mary Traves:** Environmental Information Officer, West Coast Regional Council (768 0466 or 0508 800 118)

**Tom Belton:** Technical Support Officer Biosecurity & Weeds, Department of Conservation, West Coast - Tai Poutini Conservancy, Hokitika (03 756 9100)



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)

*The West Coast Regional Council does not accept liability for any advice given on this sheet regarding application of herbicides for pest plant control. The brand names listed imply neither endorsement of those brands, nor criticism of any other brands not listed.*