

Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Salvinia

Salvinia (*Salvinia x molesta*) is an invasive, fast-growing plant. It's one of the world's most damaging aquatic weeds and forms dense mats which can completely smother large waterways and badly impact water quality.

What does salvinia look like?

- A free-floating fern that forms rosettes
- Young plants have small pale green leaves that lie flat on the surface of the water and are attached to a horizontal stem just below the water surface
- Mature leaves are brownish and more crowded, compacted and folded, forming dense mats
- Upper surfaces have many rows of water-repellent, basket-like hairs.

Why is salvinia a pest?

A native to South America, salvinia is a rapidly growing freshwater weed. It forms large dense floating mats that can cover entire waterbodies, change water flows and increase sediment. It impacts our native freshwater species and ecosystems, increases drowning risk for people and livestock, and stops people from enjoying water-based recreation.

Where is it found in NZ?

Salvinia has been found mostly in the warmer areas of the North Island, although sites have been recorded as far south as Christchurch. Preferring warmer temperatures, salvinia has the potential to establish in most lowland areas of the North Island and warmer coastal regions of the South Island. It can double its size in just two weeks in the sub-tropical temperatures of the North Island.



Salvinia infestation in stormwater pond

Salvinia is an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993. It is illegal to sell, grow, display, or distribute it, and any sightings must be reported immediately to Biosecurity New Zealand.



Juvenile salvinia



Water-repellent hairs on salvinia plant



Mature salvinia plants with compacted, folded leaves

If you see or suspect it, call **0800 80 99 66** or visit **report.mpi.govt.nz**
For more information: **www.mpi.govt.nz/NIPR**

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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