

CAULERPA TAXIFOLIA

Marine Aquarium Weed

THE THREAT: This weed has the potential to severely damage New Zealand's marine environment. It rapidly forms large dense fields that can smother marine native species. This weed was accidentally released from a public aquarium into the Mediterranean Sea in 1984 and the resulting invasion now covers over 30,000 acres of seafloor – destroying native habitats and local marine life. *Caulerpa taxifolia* is an unwanted organism in New Zealand. It is an offence to grow or spread this weed. *Caulerpa taxifolia* is a serious pest that requires safe and prompt disposal.

Contact MAF Biosecurity New Zealand on 0800 80 99 66.

What is *Caulerpa taxifolia*?

Caulerpa taxifolia is a rapidly growing saltwater seaweed. It is known to be used internationally in tropical aquariums and refugia as a filter medium.

What does it look like?

- Bright green seaweed with feather-like fronds.
- Long horizontal runners which can grow up to nine metres.
- Runners give rise to the many upright fronds.
- Fronds are flattened looking, with a smooth and distinct mid rib.
- Fronds grow from 15 – 60cm.



Caulerpa taxifolia – note flattened frond with distinct midrib

How can I help?

Learn to recognise *Caulerpa taxifolia*.

DO NOT use it in your aquarium.

If you believe you have seen it, or know someone who has it, ring the **MAFBNZ freephone 0800 80 99 66**. You will be given advice and arrangements will be made for its safe destruction.

Safe disposal and decontamination

- Freeze any weed and attached material (eg rocks) for 24 hours. Then dispose of the material in the household rubbish going to land fill.
- Remaining tank water should go into the sewer system, through a toilet, and NOT into stormwater drains or waterways.
- Aquariums that have contained the weed must then be treated with a bleach solution and thoroughly air dried.



Caulerpa taxifolia showing runner

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.BIOSECURITY.GOV.TZ

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