



SEPTEMBER 2008

Ludwigia peruviana PRIMROSE WILLOW

Ludwigia is a perennial aquatic shrub also known as Peruvian Primrose. Its prolific seeding means that it can become a serious riparian weed.

DESCRIPTION

Ludwigia grows in dense stands along the banks of still or slow moving waterways and can grow out over the water for up to 2 m. It has dark green or brownish green stems of up to 3 m high which are multi branched and hairy when young. Its leaves are 5-10 cm long and 1-3 cm wide and mostly alternate but rarely opposite. The leaves are hairy with prominent veins with a dark green upper and light green underside. Leaves grow in spring and drop in winter. *Ludwigia* has flowers 2-4 cm in diameter with four yellow petals up to 3 cm long. The flowers appear in late summer/autumn. The fruit is an erect capsule rusty coloured and hairy 2 cm long and 1 cm wide. The seeds are numerous, minute and light brown.

Effects on the environment

Ludwigia has the ability to fill slowly flowing or still waterways clogging the system and preventing native flora from growing. This decreases the rate of flow significantly leading to decreased river health.

It also has adverse effects on use of the waterway as a habitat for fauna.

HABITAT

Humid, warm temperate regions are favourable for growth of *Ludwigia*. It invades still water or slowly flowing streams, wet marshy soils, drying mud and creek banks. It can grow on the banks as well as form floating mats covering the water.



Ludwigia peruviana flower and seed pods on stem.



Ludwigia peruviana seedlings germinate en masse.

Source: Sutherland Shire Council

ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION

A native of South America, *Ludwigia* was introduced into Australia probably as a garden ornamental for ponds. It was first recorded as naturalised in 1970 in Botany Wetlands, Sydney; it has now been recorded as far south as Heathcote extending to Gosford in the north. Dispersal of seed along waterways is mainly by water, but it can occur between streams as seeds are either eaten by or stick to waterbirds. It also has the ability to reshoot from the stem. When in contact with moist soil stem pieces can take root. This usually occurs after dispersal by floods and during removal.

DECLARATION

Ludwigia has been gazetted as a noxious weed in certain areas of NSW including Sutherland Shire. The Noxious Weeds Act 1993 is an instrument serving the protection of our environment, general health of the community and agricultural production. Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 all noxious weeds must be controlled. The act applies to all landowners and occupiers. This weed has a control category of class 3. For class 3 noxious weeds: *“the plant must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed”*. Failure to comply with the prescribed categories may result in a fine of 100 penalty units.

CONTROL

Small *Ludwigia* plants can be removed by hand taking as much of the roots as possible. However this may not be practical or desirable due to damage done to aquatic ecosystems caused by manual or mechanical removal. Hand removal is only beneficial if correct disposal is undertaken. All plants should be carefully handled and bagged and then be disposed of in domestic garbage. Never place unwanted plants into bushland or reserves. The use of herbicides on or near water is regulated under various acts that are administered by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). Herbicide controls are available for *Ludwigia* but you should contact the nearest EPA regional office or appropriate council staff and request information concerning the use of herbicides near water before proceeding with herbicide applications.



Ludwigia peruviana infestation along a creek line.
Source: Sutherland Shire Council

For further information contact
Bushcare or Greenweb Units
on 02 9710 0333
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Sutherland Shire
COUNCIL 