# Elodea canadensis

## COMMON NAMES
Canadian pondweed

## BIOSTATUS
Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

## CATEGORY
Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Monocots

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Submerged, bottom rooted perennial aquatic plant in the oxygenweed group, that grows in both still and flowing waters. The stems are brittle and pale with bright green leaves occurring in whorls of three, and often with little space between each whorl. Flowers are inconspicuous.

## FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Submerged, bottom-rooting perennial, growing to 8+ m. Stems slender, brittle, branched, 1 mm diameter leaves in whorls of 3 (opposite at base), linear, 6-12 x 2 mm, translucent dark green. Male (very rare) and female flowers on separate plants. Flowers on surface, on long thread-like stalks, 5-petalled, 5 mm diam, white, tinged purple. No seed set in NZ.

## SIMILAR TAXA
Egeria (Egeria densa) and lagarosiphon (Lagarosiphon major). Canadian pondweed is much smaller than egeria and almost always has leaves arranged in whorls of 3 compared with egeria which is usually in whorls of at least 4. Lagarosiphon has leaves that curl downwards and are arranged in spirals around the stem (not whorls).

## DISTRIBUTION
Widely naturalised through the North and South Islands.

## HABITAT
Aquatic: a submerged plant in moderately fast flowing to still water bodies.

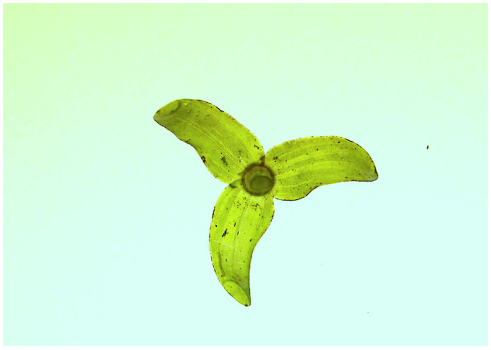
## GENUS
Elodea

## FAMILY
Hydrocharitaceae

## AUTHORITY
Elodea canadensis Michaux

## FLOWERING
November, December, January

## FRUITING
No fruit seen in NZ



Leaves. Photographer: Rohan Wells, Date taken: 26/06/2012, Licence: All rights reserved.

Specimen of plant. Photographer: Rohan Wells, Date taken: 26/06/2012, Licence: All rights reserved.

## YEAR NATURALISED
1872

## ORIGIN
North America.

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Ornamental aquarium plant.

## TOLERANCES
Tolerant of water temperatures up to 28 degrees C. Requires moderate to high light.

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Reproduces by vegetative fragmentation from stem material and dispersed within catchments via water flow. New catchments invaded by contaminated boats and trailers (occasionally motor cooling water), eel nets, diggers, people liberating fish, floods from ornamental ponds. Sold in the aquarium trade.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
OBL: Obligate Wetland
Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

## ETYMOLOGY
**elodea**: From the Greek elodes 'marsh'
**canadensis**: Of Canada

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)
**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report here.

## NVS CODE
ELOCAN

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication. http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species.
Coffey BT, Clayton JS (1988). New Zealand water plants: a guide to plants found in New Zealand freshwaters. Ruakura Agricultural Cente. 65pp.
Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.
Popay et al (2010). An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand, third edition. NZ Plant Protection Society Inc, 416pp.

## ATTRIBUTION
Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

## MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/elodea-canadensis/

## PDF DATE
08 June 2026