

Caulerpa taxifolia (*Caulerpa taxifolia*)



Submerged
Aquatic Plant



The feather-like fronds grow upwards

Certain strains of the green alga *Caulerpa taxifolia* are highly invasive and can cause major ecological and economic damage. *Caulerpa taxifolia* was originally cultivated as an aquarium plant and now infests large areas of the Mediterranean Sea.

Preferring water temperatures of around 20°C, it can survive in cool waters in a range of habitats from polluted industrial ports to clean, isolated bays to exposed headlands. It can form dense green underwater meadows and rapidly become the dominant organism, growing anywhere from the sea shore down to 35m in depth.

This seaweed produces running stems, from which regularly spaced, feather-like fronds grow upwards and are anchored by root-like structures.

Tiny fragments of the plant can regenerate, making it virtually impossible to eradicate once it has taken hold in an area. Fishing gear and yacht anchors assist the spread of *Caulerpa*, so should be cleaned and inspected regularly.

This plant is not yet known in New Zealand. Any possible sightings should be reported to your Regional Council and the Ministry of Fisheries (0800 468 233) at once. Do not attempt to pick or remove the plant.