

Senegal tea (*Gymnocoronis spilanthoides*)



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Flower heads have many white florets

Senegal tea is a perennial, semi-aquatic herb, growing up to 1.5m tall when flowering. It is restricted to wet, marshy soils and still or flowing water and prefers fertile conditions. Until recently it was sold as an ornamental pond and aquarium plant, under the name of *Hygrophila costata*, a totally unrelated plant. It is likely to still occur in many garden ponds.

The plant's dark green leaves are hairless and shiny, with toothed margins and are attached to the stem in opposite pairs. Its stems are prostrate, hollow, frequently branch and root at the nodes, forming an intertwining, buoyant mat. The flower heads, formed between November and April, are clover-like with many white florets.

Seed and stem fragments are spread by water movement or by animals and humans.

Small infestations can be cleared by hand and all parts of the plant burned or deep buried. For large infestations, herbicide should be applied in spring or summer, either by spray or weed-wiper.

Senegal tea is only naturalised in a few places. Any suspected new infestations should be reported at once to your Regional Council who can provide advice on control methods.