



MEDIA RELEASE

Cabomba In Gove Sparks New Alert

Territorians have been urged to check household ponds and aquariums for the noxious water weed cabomba.

The Weeds Management Branch (WMB) of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts made the call after cabomba was found recently in a Gove backyard pond.

Cabomba is a submerged plant with fan-like leaves and small white flowers that emerge a few centimeters above water. It can reduce water quality, water storage capacity, foul water pumping equipment, impede fishing and swimming, and improve mosquito breeding conditions.

The discovery of cabomba at Marlow Lagoon in Palmerston prompted legislation banning its sale from 1997 and ordered all existing plants be eradicated.

Marlow Lagoon has been cabomba free since 2002 although a new infestation was found in Darwin River in October 2004.

WMB is currently working to eradicate the Darwin River infestation but remain concerned some members of the public may still have cabomba growing in household ponds, especially in the Gove area.

Aquatic Weeds Officer Peter Clifton said the recent Gove finding is very concerning.

Mr Clifton said the original cabomba plant was bought in Darwin 15 years ago and a cutting was given to the owner of the house where the cabomba was eventually recognised by a local weed manager. He said cuttings from this second plant were also passed on to others.

All of these cabomba plants were removed and destroyed by WMB officers and subsequent surveys of local waterways found no signs of cabomba.

"We don't know how many plants purchased prior to 1997 are still growing in backyard ponds or whether cuttings have also been passed on to others," Mr Clifton said.

"Some people still have cabomba growing in their backyard despite extensive awareness campaigns. A lot of people are simply unaware what plants are growing in their ponds."

There is also concern that people have purchased cabomba from interstate via the internet, unaware the plant is regarded a weed of national significance.

"Most people don't realise that it is illegal to bring aquatic life into the NT from interstate without a permit to do so," Mr Clifton said.

"Finding cabomba in Pine Creek and Gove suggests it could be anywhere in the NT.

"We urge people not to discard any plant or animal into our waterways because such a simple act can have disastrous consequences.

"We are happy to check household ponds for cabomba and will freely remove any plants."

People are encouraged to familiarise themselves with cabomba by visiting the cabomba website at www.cabomba.nt.gov.au or by requesting information by phoning the Cabomba Hotline on 8999 8954. Cabomba sightings can also be reported to the hotline.

Media note – For more information contact Peter Clifton on 8999 2315

