

W.19 FINE OXYGEN WEED/FYNBABERGRAS

(*Lagarosiphon muscoides* Harv.)

Family: Hydrocharitaceae

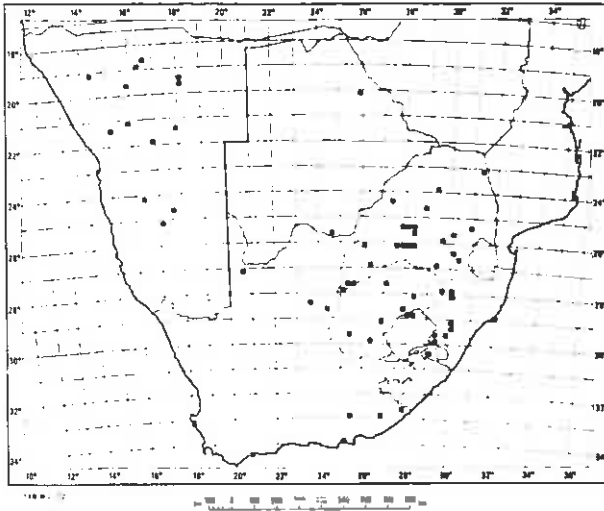
(Compiled by the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria)

A submerged waterplant densely covered with slightly recurved, strap-shaped leaves. Its rather weak stems sprout from a rhizome and are up to 1 m long and 0,5 to 2 mm thick. The leaves are soft and thin, about 10 mm long and up to 1,5 mm broad with minute teeth along the margin. The white to pink flowers are only a few mm across and float on the water surface. Male flowers break loose from the plant while female ones remain attached by long slender stalks. The narrowly egg-shaped fruit is 5 to 10 mm long and contains about 9 seeds.

Related species

Five species of *Lagarosiphon* are found in Southern Africa. They are very similar but can be roughly divided into two groups: (1) Plants with soft, only slightly recurved, narrow leaves, 0,5 to 2 mm broad, and (2) Plants with firmer, strongly recurved leaves which are 2 to 3 mm broad. Fine





oxygen weed belongs to group (1) but can be distinguished from the two other members of the group by its leaves having a very narrow colourless margin. Other species in this group have leaves which are green up to the margin.

Distribution

The plant is widespread throughout the summer rainfall region of Southern Africa. It extends into Botswana and tropical East Africa.

Ecology

Fine oxygen weed thrives in both still and flowing water 0,5 to 1,5 m deep, and may form dense masses. It spreads by seed and by regenerating from broken-off portions of the plant.

Importance

Fine oxygen weed may become a pest at times by choking up shallow dams and rivers.

Legislation

The plant, together with all other members of its family, is a proclaimed noxious weed throughout the Republic of South Africa (Proclamation 252/1956 (Government Gazette



2002/2 Nov. 1956) of the Weeds Act No. 42 of 1937).

Notes

The scientific name is derived from the Greek *lagaros* = slender, and *syphon* = tube; *muscooides* = looking like a moss.

Species Number: 0088.000 - 00400

Literature

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