

Regionally prohibited weeds of the Mallee: One-leaf Cape Tulip



Above: Flower of the One-leaf Cape Tulip.
Photo: Mark Imhof, DPI Victoria.

Left: One-leaf Cape Tulip.
Photo: Mark Imhof, DPI Victoria.

One-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea flaccida*) originated in southern Africa and is considered troublesome because it is poisonous to cattle, sheep and goats, and it displaces native ground cover species. It is a regionally prohibited weed in the Mallee. Under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)*, land owners must take all reasonable steps to eradicate regionally prohibited weeds on their land.

Description

One-leaf Cape Tulip is a perennial herb that grows 30-60 cm tall. It has stiff and erect stems that often branch and zigzag towards the top. Each plant has only one

leaf which is flat, ribbed, 1-2 cm wide and up to 1 m long.

Corms (swollen, underground stems which store food for the plant) are about 1-2 cm wide, they are white on the inside with light brown fibres on the outside.

Flowers are orange to salmon pink, made up of six petals with a yellow patch in the centre. They are 3-5 cm in diameter, grow in clusters at the end of branches and have a sickly sweet scent. The plant flowers from September to October.

Seeds are contained in an irregular, angular capsule. Plants do not flower and set seed until they are two to three years old.



At a glance

One-leaf Cape Tulip is:

- A regionally prohibited weed in the Mallee;
- A perennial herb that invades pastures, roadsides and disturbed areas; and
- Poisonous to stock.

Applying a registered herbicide is the best control method. However, dormant corms in the soil can make control difficult.

One-leaf Cape Tulip may be confused with Two-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea miniata*). However, Two-leaf Cape Tulip has two to three leaves, has a hard black covering on corms and does not produce seeds. Two-leaf Cape Tulip is also regionally prohibited in the Mallee.

Distribution

One-leaf Cape Tulip has a scattered distribution in Victoria, but occurs in extensive patches in the Western Districts. The Mallee region is generally free of the weed, however there have been sightings of the One-leaf Cape Tulip on the southern border with Wimmera.

One-leaf Cape Tulip also occurs in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Dispersal

One-leaf Cape Tulip is often spread in hay cut from infested paddocks. Machinery and animals can also transport seeds and corms to new areas. Dried plants break off with seed capsules intact, and can then be carried by wind or water.

History

One-leaf Cape Tulip is native to South Africa. It was brought to Australia as an ornamental garden plant in the mid 1800s.

Why it is a problem

One-leaf Cape Tulip is poisonous to stock. All parts of the plant are toxic, whether green or dry. Stock usually learn to avoid the plant, however, deaths can occur in young animals that are not accustomed to the weed.

Infestations also outcompete and displace native ground cover species.

Table 1: Responsibilities of land managers and Government in controlling noxious weeds as per the CaLP Act.

Category	Description	Responsibilities
State prohibited weeds	Weeds that do not occur in Victoria or occur in relatively small infestations. These weeds pose a serious threat and it is possible to eradicate them.	The Victorian Government is responsible for eradicating these weeds.
Regionally prohibited weeds	Weeds that are not yet widespread in a region, eradication is possible.	Land owners must take all reasonable steps to eradicate these weeds on their land.
Regionally controlled weeds	These weeds are widespread in a region and need ongoing control to prevent their spread.	Land owners must take all reasonable steps to prevent the growth and spread of these weeds on their land.

Control options

Application of a registered herbicide is the best way to control the plant. However, it can be difficult control because spraying will not kill dormant corms in the soil, which can then grow the following season. The best time to spray is from April to August.

Care needs to be taken to prevent vehicles or machinery from spreading corms from one part of a property to another.

What you can do help

Land managers can help prevent the spread of weeds on their property by:

- Maintaining vehicle hygiene to reduce spread of weeds by machinery and equipment;
- Minimising ground disturbance; and
- Monitoring their property to detect new weeds early and eradicate them before they become established.

Further information

The 'Mallee Invasive Plant and Animal Management Strategy outlines how the

Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) manages weeds in the region. For a copy of the strategy, visit the Mallee CMA website at www.malleecma.vic.gov.au or contact the Mallee CMA on 5051 4377.

The CaLP Act sets out the responsibilities of land managers and the Government in controlling noxious weeds in Victoria (see Table 1).

References

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