

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



Above: Two-leaf Cape Tulip cormils and roots.
Photo: DPI.

Left: The salmon pink flowers of the Two-leaf Cape Tulip.
Photo: DPI.

Two-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea miniata*) originated in southern Africa and, like the One-leaf Cape Tulip 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

Two-leaf Cape Tulip is a perennial herb that grows up to 60 cm tall. It has stiff and erect stems that tend to branch and zigzag towards the top. Each plant has two to

three leaves, which are flat, 1-2 cm wide and up to 80 cm long.

Flowers are orange to salmon pink, made up of six petals with a yellow centre. They are 2-4 cm in diameter and grow in clusters at the end of branched stems. The plant flowers in September and October.

Two-leaf Cape Tulip does not produce seeds. Instead it reproduces by corms and cormils. Corms are swollen, underground stems which store food for the plant. In this species corms are around 1-2 cm wide with a hard black covering. Cormils are smaller and grow in clusters around the base of plants and at the points where leaves join the stem.

At a glance

Two-leaf Cape Tulip is:

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

Applying a registered herbicide is the best control method.

Two-leaf Cape Tulip may be confused with One-leaf Cape Tulip (*Moraea flaccida*). The easiest way to distinguish the species is by the number of leaves; Two-leaf Cape Tulip has two to three smaller leaves, whereas One-leaf Cape Tulip has one larger leaf. One-leaf Cape Tulip also has a light-brown, fibrous covering on the corm compared to the hard, black covering of Two-leaf Cape Tulip. One-leaf Cape Tulip is also a regionally prohibited in the Mallee.

Distribution

In Victoria Two-leaf Cape Tulip has a scattered distribution in the Western Districts and around Geelong and Colac. The Mallee region is generally free of the weed, however there have been sightings of the Two-leaf Cape Tulip on the southern border with Wimmera.

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

Dispersal

Cultivation and movement of contaminated farm produce (e.g. hay) are the most common forms of dispersal for the Cape tulip in an agricultural environment. Cape tulip corms can also be spread by floodwaters.

History

Two-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

Two-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.

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.

Infestations of Two-leaf Cape Tulip also outcompete and displace native ground cover species.

Control options

Application of a registered herbicide is the best way to control the plant. However, it can be difficult to 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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Published August 2012

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