



**MACRO  
PLANT**



mat plant



flat-branched

**Techniques needed and shape**

**Classification**

**\*Descriptive name**

Phylum: Chlorophyta; Order: Bryopsidales; Family: Caulerpacaeae  
aquarium weed; §invasive weed

**Features**

1. a green alga rapidly forming impenetrable tangled mats.
2. upright branches arise from a runner anchored into mud or sand by rhizoids
3. flat, **narrow** ultimate branches (ramuli) arise **oppositely** along the cylindrical upright branches (axes). Ramuli are **constricted** at their **bases**.
4. the plant is capable of rapid propagation from fragments, remaining alive after several hours of exposure to air.

**Occurrences**

Genetic studies show this to be a new and aggressive race of a tropical species originally widespread but uncommon in the Indo-Pacific region, including Queensland. The mutant race appears to spread only by fragmentation. It is a pest species throughout the Mediterranean Sea, and has recently grown in plague proportions in West Lakes (Adelaide) S Australia, necessitating expensive control measures (see [www.sardi.sa.gov.au](http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au) and [www.marine.csiro.au/crimp](http://www.marine.csiro.au/crimp)) in shallow water and amongst seagrass meadows

**Habitat**

**Special requirements**



1. view the narrow, **upswept** ultimate branches (ramuli) in **opposite rows** along the cylindrical stalk of upright branches, except occasionally at the base
2. readily recognised from the dense tangled mats smothering other marine life. on sand and mud in sheltered, shallow waters.

**Usual Habitat**

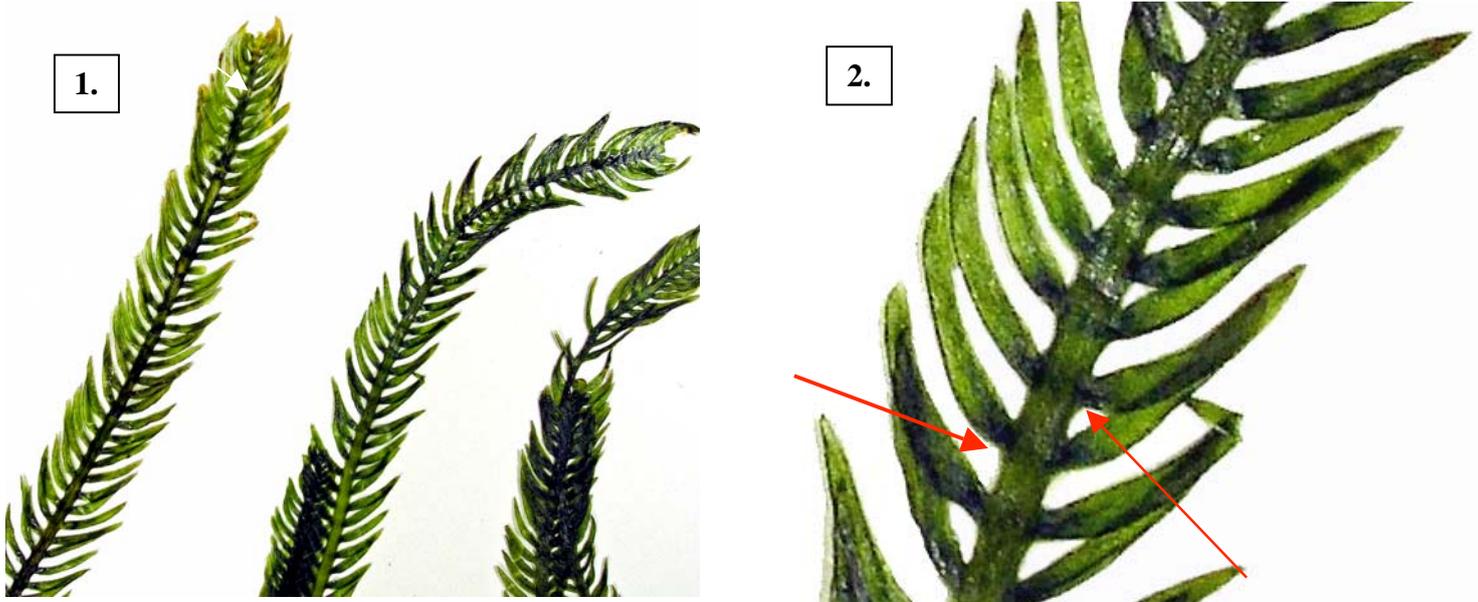
**Similar Species**

slender plants of *Caulerpa scalpelliformis*, but that species is relatively uncommon, the stalk of the upright branches is **flat** and the ramuli **alternate** along it in 2 rows. In *C. distichophylla*, common only in W. Australia, ramuli are **opposite**, slightly compressed but **not** constricted at their bases like *C. taxifolia* and upright branches become flattened towards the tip

**Description in the Benthic Flora**

not available (species was not present in southern Australia at the time of publication)

**Details of Anatomy**



1., 2.

Two magnifications of upright branches (axes) of *Caulerpa taxifolia* (A69375) from West Lakes, S Australia showing the ultimate branches (ramuli), narrow at the base (arrowed), curving upwards, in two opposite rows

\* Descriptive names are inventions to aid identification, and are not commonly used

§ name used in Edgar, G. *Australian Marine Life, 2nd Ed.* (2008)

“Algae Revealed” R N Baldock, S Australian State Herbarium, February 2005

3.



*Caulerpa taxifolia* (Vahl) C Agardh (A72025) from Port Adelaide estuary, S Australia

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