

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Waterprimrose

Ludwigia hexapetala, *peplodes*

Other common names: Hairy waterprimrose

USDA symbol: LUHE

ODA rating: B and T



Introduction: Waterprimrose are native to Uruguay and southern Brazil. The two species have flourished in the U.S. for many decades but only in the last 10-15 years have they significantly expanded their range and density. There are multiple species and sub-species of primrose on the west coast and are now demonstrating highly invasive growth habits. These species were sold in the nursery trade as aquatic garden plants.

Distribution in Oregon: Multiple large infestations occur in sloughs, ponds and other waterways mostly in areas near the Willamette River and its tributaries. Populations are expanding at an alarming rate. Deschutes County also had one infestation that is currently under control.

Description: Waterprimrose are perennial occurring in marshes, swamps, ditches, ponds, and around lake margins, where they form dense floating mats up to 3 feet tall, crowding out native species. The stems root freely at the nodes either in the water or in damp soil. Reproduction occurs both by seeds and vegetatively through fragmentation. It produces light green, floating stems early in the season with rosettes of smooth, shiny, rounded leaves. Later the stems become erect, reddish-brown, and produce elongated, willow-like, pointed leaves arranged alternately along the stems. Flowers are solitary, up to an inch in diameter, having five to six bright yellow petals. Flowering occurs from mid to late summer and continues until a killing frost

Impacts: Significant clogging of irrigation canals and drainage ditches occurs in California where *Ludwigia* has established a foothold. Due to the potential for crop damage and environmental concerns, plant removal is often limited to mechanical means that are expensive and time consuming. Recreation is impacted due to the loss of fish habitat, fishing access, clogging of boating waterways, and swimming areas. Wildlife habitats are degraded by monoculture infestations. Infested waterways suffer drops in dissolved oxygen, which kill fish and invertebrates reducing productivity. Waterfowl lose preferred food plants and feeding grounds. Species richness of all species drops significantly. Infested waterways build up significant populations of mosquitoes.

Biological controls: No approved biological control agents are available at this time.

