



## Protect the Top of the South from *Caulerpa* exotic seaweeds found at Great Barrier and Great Mercury islands

Exotic seaweeds *Caulerpa brachypus* and *Caulerpa parvifolia* have been found in waters at Great Barrier Island (Aotea) and Great Mercury Island (Ahuahu). These exotic seaweeds can spread rapidly and could affect native species. Find out about these seaweeds and what's being done.

### These seaweeds can form vast, dense beds

*Caulerpa brachypus* and *Caulerpa parvifolia* are seaweeds exotic to New Zealand. Exotic means they have come from overseas. They are native to the Indo-Pacific region, ranging from Africa to Australia, the Pacific Islands, and southern Japan. *Caulerpa brachypus* is considered an invasive pest in Florida, the United States, and Martinique in the Caribbean.

Both seaweeds are closely related and appear identical. They have fronds up to 10 centimetres long that rise from long runners or roots known as stolons. They can be found growing below the tide line at between 2 metres and 30 metres on both hard surfaces and in sandy areas. In favourable conditions, they can spread rapidly, forming vast, dense beds or meadows.

### How exotic *Caulerpa* species can spread

The two seaweeds can be spread through breaking into little pieces. This can happen, for example, by wave action or when anchors and fishing gear are moved into or through weed beds. Fragments are also carried easily on coastal currents.

Pieces can get tangled in or stuck on equipment (for example, nets, dive and fishing gear, and crayfish pots). It can survive out of water for up to a week or more if it's in a moist location (like in an anchor locker or a bunched-up fishing net).

### What you can do to help

- Anchor and anchor chain must be thoroughly cleaned of any seaweed before moving from northern locations. This means removing any visible seaweed and rinsing the anchor and chain.
- Any weed or plant matter found on gear must be placed back into the same waters. This equipment then rinsed off with water before being re-used in the ocean.
- Keep an eye out for exotic *Caulerpa* species. If you believe you have seen them in areas outside of Blind Bay, Tryphena Harbour, and Whangaparapara harbours at Great Barrier Island, or the coastline of Great Mercury Island between Ahikopua and Maunganui Points:
  - note the location
  - take a photo if possible
  - contact Biosecurity New Zealand on [0800 80 99 66](tel:0800809966)
  - or complete the online reporting form at [report.mpi.govt.nz](http://report.mpi.govt.nz)

### Images to help you identify the seaweeds



A dense mat of *Caulerpa brachypus* in Blind Bay.  
*Caulerpa brachypus* growing in Blind Bay

*Caulerpa parvifolia* at  
Great Mercury Island



## Information sheets

[Caulerpa brachypus and the Controlled Area Notice at Great Barrier Island](#) [PDF, 2.5 MB]

[Leaflet on Caulerpa brachypus and the Controlled Area Notice at Great Barrier Island](#) [PDF, 4.2 MB]

[Caulerpa - Great Barrier Island biosecurity response](#) [PDF, 943 KB]

## Who to contact

If you have any questions about *Caulerpa*, email [caulerpa@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:caulerpa@mpi.govt.nz)