

Risk assessment for water spinach (*Ipomoea aquatica*) in Texas

Earl W. Chilton II*

pp. 96-102

Water spinach (*Ipomoea aquatica*) is a member of the morning glory family (Convolvulaceae) that is native to India and Southeast Asia but has been widely cultivated in many tropical areas around the world. Despite initial predictions of potential invasiveness, water spinach appears to be a relatively low-risk species, even in the states where it was most likely to establish such as Texas, Florida, and southern California. Risk analysis suggests that it is a very low-risk species in Texas. After 20 to 30 years of commercial production in California, Florida, and Texas, it is currently found outside of cultivation in only four counties in the continental United States, and is easily controlled with herbicides. Since water spinach seems to be incapable of growing outside of greenhouses in the vast majority of states, it is probably not the major invasive species threat it was once thought to be and poses little risk to Texas and most of the continental United States.