

Drowning In Weeds

There are several types of aquatic weed management strategies for groves. Use these tips to help determine which cultural and biological method is best for you.

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Aquatic plants can be a problem in lakes, ponds, canals, and ditches in citrus groves.

Control measures are needed only when an overabundance of plant growth begins to limit the desired use of a body of water. Over time, the inefficiency of a clogged intake system on an irrigation pump can result in excessive fuel consumption and diminished water delivery to the trees.

Over-abundant aquatic weed growth can also lower drainage rates

following heavy rains, resulting in severe root damage, increased disease incidence, and fruit drop.

Therefore, management of aquatic vegetation species should be an essential component of an overall water-management strategy.

Cultural Control Measures

Drawdown — Draining water from ditches and allowing them to dry out can be an effective method for controlling aquatic vegetation. However, there are some species that can withstand periods without water. In order to obtain good aquatic weed control, usually drawdown needs to be



accompanied by herbicide application.

Screening — Application of catch-screens in ditches is another technique that allows plant material to be screened along the waterway before entering the intake pipes.

Excavation — Excavation is perhaps one of the oldest and still most preferred methods of aquatic weed control. Usually, the process is done in one of two ways: either by a screen rake, which removes only the vegetation from the top of the water, or by earth removal, which allows for bottom weed, top weed, and ditch bank weed removal.

Biological Controls

Insects and Diseases — Some exotic plant species have been controlled by introduction of biological control agents. The alligator weed flea beetle has done a remarkable job of reducing the problems with alligator weed. Various biological control agents have been tested on water hyacinths throughout the years, with the most effective being two types of water hyacinth weevil and the water hyacinth mite.

Triploid Grass Carp —

The Triploid grass carp feeds upon aquatic vegetation. Its introduction into water bodies requires permitting from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



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