

Fact Sheet: Azolla

Azolla pinnata and *Azolla filicoides*

Azolla is a native, free-floating fern that is common in many still or slow-moving waterways. It is commonly used as an ornamental plant in garden ponds. There are two main types of Azolla that tend to be red in sunlight or green if shaded. Neither type are considered to be very problematic.

Although Azolla creates a large, tangled mat that can quickly cover a dam's surface and from a distance can appear to be algae. It is not harmful or toxic to stock that eat it or drink the water it is growing in. In fact, many South-East Asian countries grow Azolla as stockfeed for ducks and fish farms.

However, excessive growth on dams may cause mechanical problems such as blocked pump inlets, impeded water flow in drains or channels or very dense growth may restrict stock access to watering points, particularly for young animals.

Many dams become noticeably covered with a reddish mat of Azolla following rainfall, with the runoff containing nutrients, such as topsoil, stock manure and fertiliser.

For more information and advice on identification and control please visit the Local Land Services, Yass Valley Council Biosecurity Weeds Officer or your local agronomist.



Red Azolla on a dam



Azolla pinnata



Azolla filiculoides

Other examples of Azolla growing

