

Carpet sea squirt - frequently asked questions

1. What is the scientific name?

Didemnum vexillum



2. What does Carpet Sea squirt (CSS) look like?

CSS can appear in a range of colours – yellow, pinkish, tan or pale orange, greyish white. It grows in an encrusting manner or forms rope-like tendrils, it can look like melted wax on jetty piles or vessel hulls.

3. Why is CSS considered a pest?

CSS is a highly invasive marine invertebrate animal that can overgrow and smother native species. It can overgrow rocks, shellfish, sea sponges and man-made structures such as wharves, jetty pylons, pontoons, buoys and vessels.

4. What is CSS distribution?

It is native to east Asia, likely Japan, and has been introduced to New Zealand, North America and Europe. The Garden Island incursion of CSS was the first confirmed detection of this marine pest in Australia.

5. What impacts could CSS have on Western Australia?

CSS has the potential to impact oyster and mussel aquaculture, marine environments, dive tourism industries as well as increasing maintenance costs for commercial and recreational vessels.

6. What is the common habitat CSS is found?

CSS can establish on most hard surfaces including natural and artificial structures (marinas, moorings, etc.). It can be found in estuaries and marine waters from low tide mark to 80m.

7. How does CSS spread?

CSS reproduces both sexually and asexually, where it can grow new colonies from small fragments that may break off from larger colonies. The most common way it spreads is from infested vessels or marine equipment.

8. What is DPIRD doing about this detection?

DPIRD is working with the Australian Government Department of Defence (Defence) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on a national response to carry out surveillance and management activities. DPIRD is also working with local stakeholders and Fremantle Port Authority to manage the incursion. Key activities currently underway include:

- Additional vessel management procedures will be implemented at the marine complex to minimise the risk of further spread.
- Delimiting surveys to determine the spread of CSS.
- Working with Department of Defence on management activities.

9. What can I do to prevent the spread of CSS?

Vessel owners, recreational boaters, fishers and divers can assist in stopping the spread of marine pests and aquatic disease by keeping their boats, trailers, wetsuits and equipment clean.

Make sure that any bait, debris and seaweed is removed. Check wheel arches on trailers, boat propellers, fishing tackle and footwear.

Use soapy water to clean your boat and trailer, fishing rods and other equipment, and allow them to dry completely before using them at another location, even if it is on the same day. Do not clean in the water or allow run off to enter the ocean.

10. What can I do if I think I have found CSS?

If you find unusual marine species attached to vessels, sub-merged infrastructure or in the marine environment, report it to www.marinepests.gov.au/report

11. Where can I learn more about CSS?

Learn more about marine pests at marinepests.gov.au.

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