

# Rymill pond bloom gets the all-clear

Scientists from the State Herbarium of South Australia have confirmed that the bright green bloom in the Rymill Park pond is harmless.

Chief Botanist Professor Michelle Waycott said staff had found the pond contained two species of duckweed.

"We collected samples of the bloom and surveyed around the pond, to make sure there was nothing to worry about," Professor Waycott said.

"Some reports suggested a weedy aquatic fern called *Azolla* was causing the bloom. The bright green colour is actually from the shiny surface of the leaves of the duckweed.

"One of the two species of duckweed is the smallest flowering plant on earth, a species from the genus *Wolffia*. *Lemna*, the 'larger' one, is still less than 2mm in diameter when mature.

"These tiny flowering plants can grow rapidly when conditions are right. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggested there were more than two billion individual plants of *Lemna* and about 11.5 billion plants of *Wolffia* in the pond.

"There's also *Uva* in the bloom, which is a harmless green algae, mostly settled in clumps on the bottom of the pond. It's commonly found in ponds and waterways, especially when there are excess nutrients in the water.

"These are the sorts of naturally-occurring native aquatic plants and algae that ducks and water-dwelling insects love to eat, so we can expect to see some bird activity around the pond while the bloom lasts.

"Staff at the State Herbarium have made permanent collection of these aquatic plants, which will act as a reference point for any future aquatic plant blooms."

The State Herbarium is the centre for knowledge and information on South Australia's plants, fungi, lichens and algae.

With a collection of more than one million plant samples, it is internationally recognised for its research.

## MEDIA CONTACT

**Georgia Gowing**  
Senior Media Advisor

Department of Environment,  
Water and Natural Resources

**Phone** (08) 8204 9105

**Mobile** 0467 795 640

**Email**  
georgia.gowing@sa.gov.au

www.environment.sa.gov.au  
www.nrm.sa.gov.au

