

# CALIFORNIA WEEDY RICE

University of California Cooperative Extension

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## WEEDY RICE IDENTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Once all watergrass herbicide applications have been made, inspect surviving watergrass-like plants to rule out weedy rice. Check the collar to see if there is a ligule and auricle.

### What is weedy rice?

Weedy rice, also known as red rice, is a plant that belongs to the same genus and species as cultivated rice. In other words, it is a very close relative of cultivated rice. Because of this, the herbicides we use in rice do not kill it.

### Why is weedy rice a problem?

Weedy rice is one of the most damaging weeds of rice worldwide. It can affect yield and quality significantly. Reports from the southern US show that yields can be reduced by 60%.

### How extensive is the weedy rice problem in California?

California was practically free of weedy rice for the past 50 years but it has recently resurfaced. At the end of 2016, it was confirmed in over 10,000 acres.

### What should I do if I suspect I have weedy rice in my field?

Follow the identification guidelines in this handout to rule out weedy rice.





weedy rice

watergrass

If ligule and auricle are absent, then the plant is watergrass.

If ligule and auricle are present, then the plant is rice or weedy rice.



If a plant looks suspicious, contact a UCCE Farm Advisor to confirm the identification. If the identification is positive, follow the best management practices developed by UCCE.

To prevent infestations, follow these guidelines:

**Equipment:**

- All equipment coming into California from areas known to have weedy rice infestations must be thoroughly cleaned and inspected by the County Agricultural Commissioner.

**Planting:**

- Only use certified seed or seed produced in the Quality Assurance Program.

If weedy rice is confirmed in your field, follow these guidelines:

**During the season:**

- Use certified seed.
- Before heading, rogue weedy rice plants from the field, or cut the plants at the base below the water line. If plants have headed, cut off the seed heads into a bucket or bag to prevent seed shattering.
- Bagged seed heads should be disposed of in a landfill. Do not leave them by the side of the field.
- Keep water on the field with no drainage until harvest.

**At harvest:**

- Do not use a stripper header, as it tends to drop a lot of seed onto the soil surface.
- Harvest infested fields last. Make sure you do not contaminate other fields by moving equipment from an affected field to a clean field.

**Winter management:**

- If possible, burn straw in affected field. Straw should be cut as low as possible to the ground to facilitate burning.
- Do not perform fall tillage as this may bury weedy rice seed.
- Flood infested fields for as long as possible.

**Long-term management:**

- Fallow infested basins or fields. Apply flush irrigation in the spring and summer to germinate weedy rice seeds. Use a burn down herbicide or tillage to kill emerged plants.
- Crop rotation, if possible, allows for the use of herbicide modes of action which are not available in rice.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE WEEDY RICE TYPES IDENTIFIED IN CALIFORNIA SO FAR:



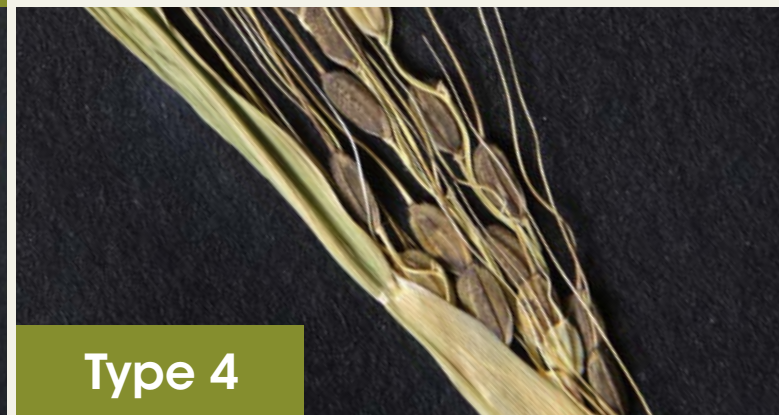
Type 3

- Awned
- Straw hull color
- Tall stature
- No color on nodes



Type 1

- Awnless
- Straw hull color
- Tall stature
- No color on nodes



Type 4

- Awned
- Black hull color
- Short stature
- No color on nodes



Type 2

- Awnless
- Bronze hull color
- Tall stature
- No color on nodes



Type 5

- Awnless
- Straw hull color
- Tall stature
- Purple-colored nodes

Purple-colored nodes