

# Invasive Species Alert

## WATER HYACINTH (EICHHORNIA CRASSIPES) \*DETECTED IN MICHIGAN\*

### IDENTIFICATION:

- Erect, free-floating perennial herb.
- Short, bulbous leaf petioles.
- Distinctive air bladders that keep leaves afloat.
- Rounded, leathery leaves arranged in whorls of 6-10.
- 14-day flowering cycle produced lavender flowers with central yellow fleck.



**HABITAT:** Mainly a tropical and sub-tropical weed growing in freshwater systems. Water hyacinth is not tolerant to temperatures below freezing for long periods of time, nor is it tolerant of high salinity water.

**NATIVE RANGE:** Amazon Basin.

**U.S. Distribution:** Water hyacinth has been introduced to at least 25 states and is widespread in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee.

**MICHIGAN DISTRIBUTION:** Detected in isolated areas in Michigan.

**LOCAL CONCERN:** This invasive species forms dense colonies in water bodies that block sunlight and crowd out native species. At optimum temperatures, it can double its biomass within a month. Dense



colonization can also impede boat traffic, reduce water flow and interfere with hydroelectric power generation.

**MEANS OF INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD:** Boat traffic, flooding, water flow, human transport, aquaculture release.

**THIS SPECIES IS ON MICHIGAN'S INVASIVE SPECIES WATCH LIST:** Report this species at [MISIN.MSU.edu](https://MISIN.MSU.edu) or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone.

Photos courtesy of Wilfredo Robles, Mississippi State University, Bugwood.org (top) and Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org (bottom).