

Invasive Species Alert

Water Lettuce

(*Pistia stratiotes*)

*Detected in Michigan *

Identification:

- Free-floating – forms a rosette of leaves that resembles an open head of lettuce
- Leaves are thick, ridged, rounded at the end, light green, and have short, white hairs
- Produce small, white to pale green flowers
- Many feathery roots dangle under the rosette

Habitat: Water lettuce can be found in ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams.

Native Range: Uncertain – likely tropical or subtropical

U.S. Distribution: Water lettuce has been introduced to the south and western United States, as well as Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware.



Troy Evans, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Bugwood.org



Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Local Concern: This freshwater perennial creates thick mats that reduce oxygen levels, block sunlight, and prevent growth of submerged vegetation. Mats interfere with recreation and can have a negative effect on fish and other aquatic species in an infested area.

This species is currently allowable for sale and possession in Michigan. If these plants are observed outside of cultivation, please report to:

www.michigan.gov/invasivespecies

Report online at www.misin.msu.edu or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone