

# 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.
- Produces 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, Delaware and Michigan.

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



**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 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 Troy Evans, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Bugwood.org (top) and Karen Brown, University of Florida, Bugwood.org. (bottom).