

# New Invaders Watch Program

## Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: **WATER HYACINTH**

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Eichornia crassipes*

FAMILY: *Pontederiaceae*

ORIGIN: Amazon basin in Brazil

US INTRODUCTION: Likely introduced in 1884 for ornamental water gardens

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Distribution and use for water gardening
- Transport on watercraft
- Disposal of unwanted plant material
- Distribution and use for aquarium
- Water

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Free-floating herbaceous perennial, spreads vegetatively by new rosettes formed on floating stolons, also by seed in warmer climates
- Leaves entire, round, waxy, up to 6 inches wide, with floating, air-filled petioles, and growing in rosettes
- Inflorescence a showy spike of 8-15 light purple, 6-petaled flowers
- Roots dark purple to black, feathery, and hanging beneath submersed leaves
- Fruit a 3-celled capsule but is rarely observed
- Threatens manmade and natural freshwater lakes, streams, ponds, sloughs and rivers



Population with flowers

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Native *Pontedaria cordata*, pickerelweed, leaves are shield-shaped to egg / heart-shaped, flowers are blue-violet and their buds are densely arranged all around the spike; a large spike can produce 100 or more flowers, although they don't bloom all at the same time. Water hyacinth has larger blue-violet flowers) and has shorter leaves that float on water. Images from <http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/wetland/plants/pickerelweed.htm>



Pickerelweed flower



Pickerelweed leaves



Native pickerelweed flower stalk leaves

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Department of Ecology, Washington State University.  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/weeds/aqua010.html>

USDA Plants Database.  
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=eicr>

California Invasive Plant Council.  
<http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/management/ipcw/pages/detailreport.cfm@username=45&surveynumber=182.php>

Center for Aquatic Invasive Plants.  
<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/141>