

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: **WATER LETTUCE**

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Pistia stratiotes*

FAMILY: *Araceae*

ORIGIN: Possibly Africa

US INTRODUCTION: Experts disagree as to whether water lettuce is native to the U.S.: it has been present in Florida since as early as 1765

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:

- Floating, perennial herb, resembles a head of lettuce, spreads by vegetative growth
- Leaves thick, dull, light green, up to 6 inches long, covered in soft hairs, with ridged parallel veins
- Flowers inconspicuous, clustered on small fleshy stalk in leaf axils. Roots feathery
- Threatens manmade and natural freshwater lakes, streams, ponds, sloughs and rivers

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES: None

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Center for Aquatic Invasive Species.
<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/328>

USDA Plants Database.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=PIST2>



Plant



Roots