



## Water Lettuce

*Pistia stratiotes*

08-04



<u>Hardiness</u>	<u>Exposure</u>	<u>Soil</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Height</u>
Zones 24, H2	Full sun or partial shade	Not required	Aquatic perennial	Inconspicuous	4 inches high

Water Lettuce (*Pistia Stratiotes*) is an invasive weed found in many areas of the southern United States. Water lettuce is a perennial monocot of the Araceae family. The plant consists of thick, soft, light green leaves (usually 6 inches in length) that form a rosette. The rosette conceals a small female flower and the seed bearing fruit of the plant. Water lettuce is supported by a large number of feathery roots submersed in the water beneath the leaves of the plant.

Water lettuce reproduces using seeds and vegetatively. Vegetative reproduction involves daughter vegetative offshoots off of mother plants on short, brittle stolons. Rapid vegetative reproduction allows water lettuce to cover an entire lake, from shore to shore, with a dense mat of connected rosettes in a short period of time. In Florida water lettuce has been known to have densities of up to a 1,000 rosettes per m2.

In order for water lettuce to survive it requires a wet, temperate habitat. It is usually found in lakes and rivers, however it can survive in mud. Water lettuce can endure temperature extremes of 15° C (59° F) and 35° C (95°). The optimal growth temperature range for the plant is 22-30° C (72-86° F).