



# *Pistia stratiotes*

## The lettuce on water

### Where does it come from?

*Pistia stratiotes* L., water lettuce originates from South America. It was introduced to South Africa as a pond plant. It is now invading water bodies mainly in subtropical areas.



D. Sharp



Gardenbreizh.org

### What does it look like?

Water lettuce is perennial, mat-forming usually free-floating seldom exceeding 150-200mm in diameter. Small inconspicuous pale green or white flowers in centre of plant. Leaves in rosettes Pale yellow - green, closely overlapping ribbed with Longitudinal veins radiating from base



Tartaportal.it

### Why is it a problem?

Thrives in nutrient rich water, can completely cover The surface. Reproduces vegetatively by budding And also from seed. Seeds in mud are probably Dispersed by wading birds. Seedlings and small Plants are dispersed by animals, humans and equipment



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### What does it do?

Mats clogs waterways and irrigation equipment, reduce water flow, impede navigation, fishing And other recreational activities. Provides breeding Areas for mosquitoes and carriers of bilharzia. Mats reduce light penetration, oxygen levels. Threaten indigenous aquatic life, plants poisonous Biocontrol is available - *Neohydronomus affinis*



**water affairs**

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Patron in Chief:  
Nelson Mandela

## Who is fighting the problem?

The working for water programme spearheads this fight against IAP's. The programme was launched in 1995 and is administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs, in partnership with the department of Agriculture and other key partners.



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## YOU AND THE LAW

Our laws relating to IAP's are aimed at:

- Preventing introductions of potential invasive species
  - Managing species that have become invasive in the country
1. Unlawful to bring alien species into SA Without a permit
  2. Unlawful to sell certain IAP's
  3. Unlawful to have certain IAP's on property
  4. Unlawful to grow certain IAP's in sensitive areas (wetlands, riparian)



www.palmblad.nl

### Further information:

Working for Water

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Adapted from: *Invasive Aquatic Plants, Henderson and Cilliers, 2002.*  
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