



Eichhornia crassipes

The worst aquatic weed in the world

Where does it come from?

Eichhornia crassipes (C. Mart.) Solms originates in tropical South America in the upper Amazon and Brazil. Also native to Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay & Paraguay. It was introduced as an ornamental pond plant that is now invading water bodies.



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What does it look like?

It is a perennial, mat forming, aquatic plant. Free floating/anchored in shallow water. Usually 100-200mm high, but 1m when growing in dense mats. Leaves have distinctive swollen bladder-like petioles. Flowers are pale blue to violet in 8-10 flowered spikes. The upper petal of each flower has prominent dark blue, yellow centered patch.



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Why the worst weed?

Seeds remain viable for 20 years and the biomass can double every 5-10 days in ideal conditions. Thick Mats disrupt aquatic environment by reducing light penetration.



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What does it do?

It causes major impacts on water use. Reduces flow in drainage canals, interferes with navigation of boats and fishing activities and other recreational activities. Displaces Indigenous vegetation. Economic and tourism impacts are staggering.



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water affairs

Department:
Water and Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



What control methods are there?

Water hyacinth can be controlled
In 3 ways: chemical, mechanical and biological
Use only registered herbicides for chemical
control. Biocontrol agents are available for
Water hyacinth. Two beetles/bruchids:
Neochetina eichhorniae & *N. bruchi*.
One mirid: *Eccritotarsus catarinensis*. One
moth: *Niphograpta albuguttalis*. One mite:
Orthogalumna terebrantis



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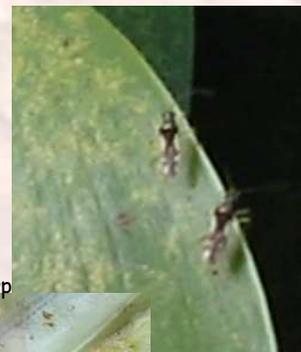
Who is fighting the problem?

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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Further information:
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How do we work?

Working for water considers the development of people as an essential element of the continued protection of our valued resources. Short term contract jobs are created through clearing activities with the emphasis on 60% women, 20% youth and 2% disabled. By creating an enabling environment for skills training, it is investing in the development of communities.

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)