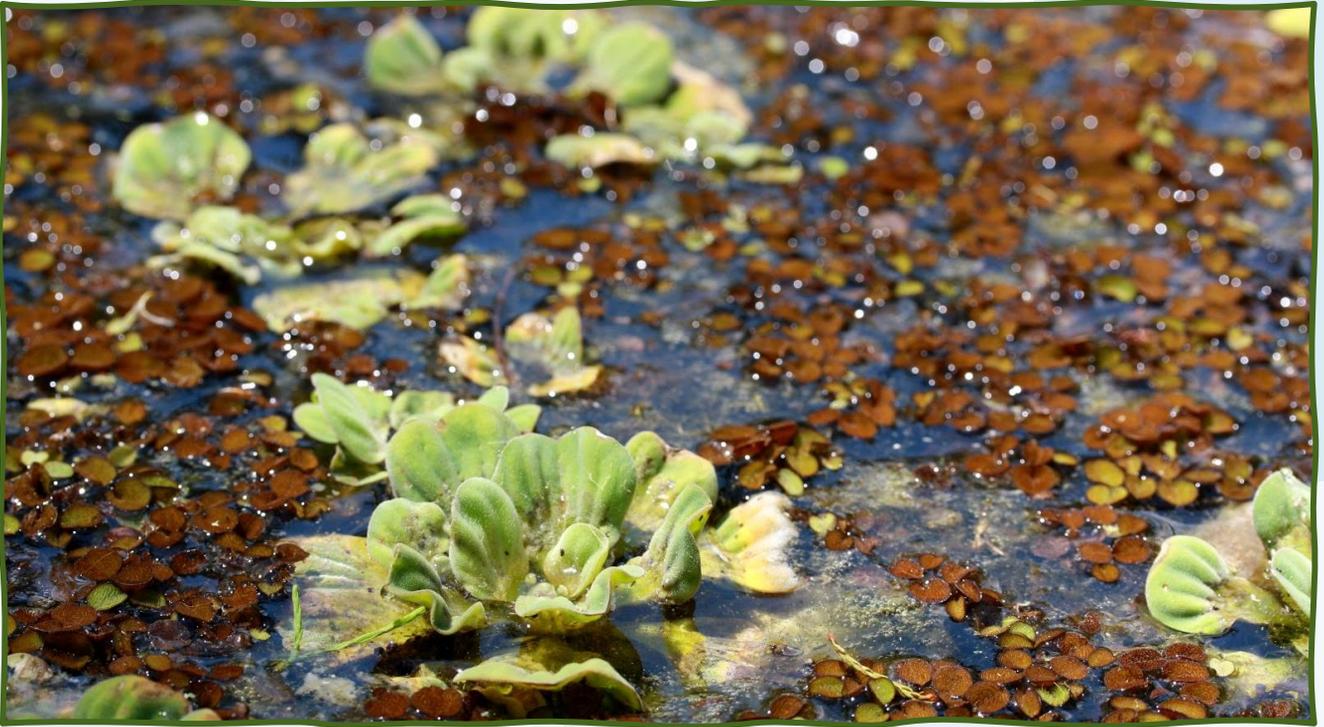


# Water Lettuce

*Pistia stratiotes*



## What is it and Why is it a Problem?

Water Lettuce is a floating, non-rooted aquatic plant that forms vast dense mats in ponds, lakes, and calm areas of rivers and streams. Being a dense floating plant, it tends to shade out native vegetation, and also consumes large amounts of dissolved oxygen from the water when it dies and decomposes. It interferes with recreational activities such as swimming, boating and fishing, and disrupts flow in canals. Water Lettuce has been found in areas surrounding Lake Ontario from Niagara Falls all the way to Kingston, as well as areas along the Rideau Canal near Ottawa. Scientists do not currently know if it is capable of reproducing and surviving the cold winter. Although Water Lettuce has yet to be reported in The Land Between, it is located in surrounding areas and thus may potentially spread to the region, especially if it is determined that it can reproduce and survive winters.



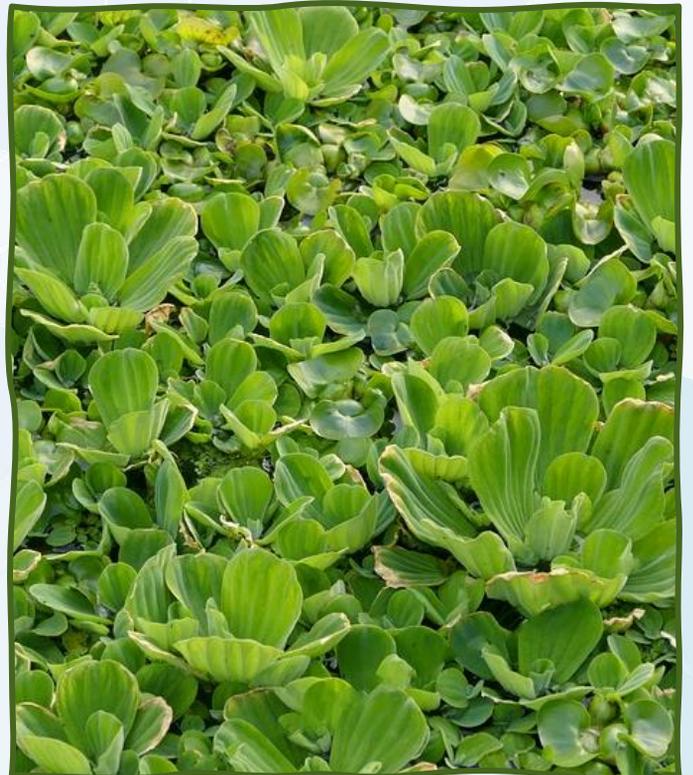
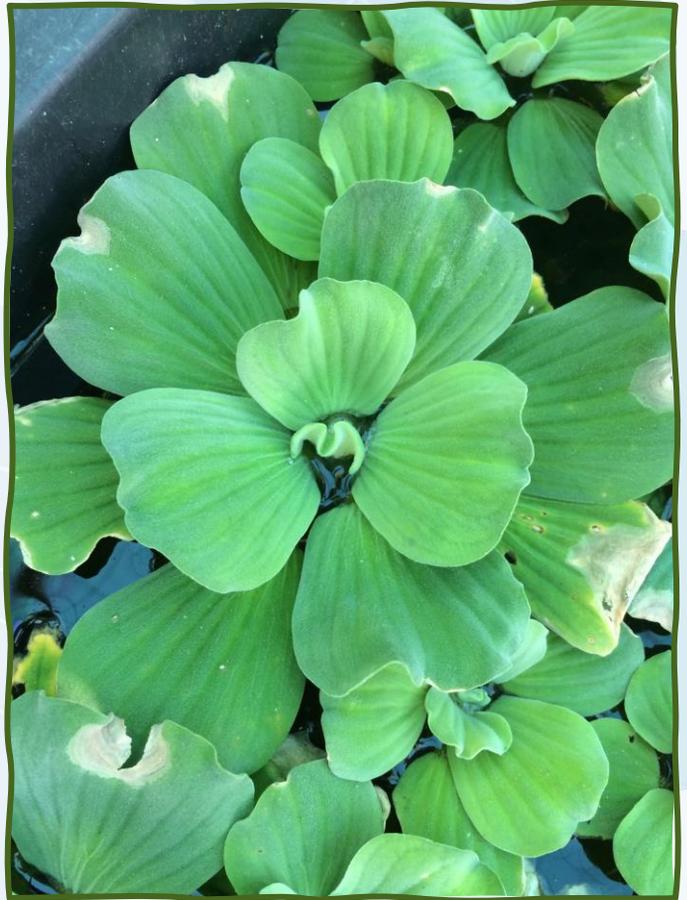
## What Does it Look Like?

- Leaves arranged in a circle, similar to an open head of lettuce
- Leaves are stem-less, thick, ridged, about 2 - 20 cm long, light green in colour, and have short, white hairs, and round tips
- Flowers are small, white-green
- Fruit is a small green berry that goes brown when mature
- Roots can be 50 - 80 cm long and connect to other plants under the water via runners or stolons



## How Can it be Managed?

- Report sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).
- Learn how to identify it so you can avoid accidentally spreading it with your fishing gear and equipment. Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear before leaving a fishing spot and before heading to a new fishing spot to remove any mud and plant fragments. Refer to the [OMNRF's Boater's Action Plan](#) for more information on cleaning your boat and gear.
- Avoid boating near known Water Lettuce infestations and reduce your speed. Propellers can cut off pieces of the plant and spread them to new areas.
- Do not buy, sell or plant Water Lettuce for watergarden use. Ensure that you only plant native plants in your garden or pond. You can refer to the [Grow me instead: Guide to Planting Native Plants in Southern Ontario](#) to determine what native aquatic plants to use instead. Oftentimes invasive aquatic plants end up reaching water bodies when people dispose of their unwanted aquarium or water garden plants. The correct way to dispose of unwanted aquatic plants is to donate them or throw them in the garbage. They can also be composted or mulched 30 m or more away from a watercourse on land.



## References

[Invasive Aquatic Plant Species: A Quick Reference Guide](#), produced by Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program and Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

[Great Lakes Nonindigenous Species Information System](#), produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Grow Me Instead \(Southern Ontario\) Brochure](#), produced by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council

[Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program](#), developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).