

Water soldier

Stratiotes aloides

Description

It was likely introduced as an ornamental, however, it can be spread by hitching a ride on recreational vehicles. No confirmed sightings currently in the United States.

Habit

Submerged aquatic plant that becomes buoyant during the summer months. Its roots can be, but are not always, attached to the mud at the bottom. Plants can be found growing in depths of up to 5 meters.

Leaves

40 cm long, sword-shaped, bright green in color, with sharp spines, and form a large rosette, or group of leaves arranged in a circle.

Stems

Flowers

Flowers are white in color with 3 petals,





developing into 1 to 3.5 cm long fleshy berries.

Fruits and Seeds

Long, fleshy berries containing up to 24 seeds.

Habitat

Native to Central Europe and northwest Asia. It grows well in ponds, lakes and rivers.

Reproduction

Reproduces mainly by vegetative means, as mature plants produce plantlets which detach and are carried downstream to take root in other locations. It also reproduces by seed, which is carried downstream when the plant is submerged.

Similar

Resembles aloe (*Aloe* spp.).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Avoid infested areas or reduce your speed when traveling by water soldier infestations. Boat wake can dislodge plants and offsets and allow them to spread to new areas. Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment after each use. Remove all plants, animals and mud before moving to a new waterbody. Avoid planting water soldier in your water garden or aquarium.

Credits

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