



Water hyacinth

(*Eichhornia crassipes*)

Originated in South America. The plant was introduced for its aesthetic value and is now found in tropical regions around the world.

Description

- A floating, perennial plant, that can reach up to 60 cm in height
- Leaves are arranged in a pseudo basal rosette, have a rounded blade, no hairs and are 3.5 to 16 cm long and 4 to 14 cm wide, with very pulpy stems that serve as floaters
- Sessile flowers, highly odorous, in groups of 4 to 25 on a central stem, light purple in colour with a yellow spot on the upper tepal, the tepals being 3 to 4 cm long and 1.5 to 2.7 cm wide

Ecology and reproduction

- Calm, shallow waters that are high in nutrient content
- Can accept major variations in the water level (it can survive on wet sediment in dewatered areas) and a wide range of pH values (4 to 10)
- Cannot tolerate temperatures lower than 5°C
- Flowering from June to October, at a temperature of 18°C or higher
- Rapid vegetative multiplication (generation of stolons at the base of the leaves)
- Can produce up to 300 tons of biomass (freshly cut) per hectare

Documentation

- Fried G. 2012. Guide des plantes invasives. Belin, Paris, 272 pp.
- Dutartre A. et Rebillard J-P. 2015. Les principaux végétaux aquatiques du Sud-Ouest de la France. Agence de l'eau Adour-Garonne et Irstea, 204 pp.
- Coetzee J. *et al.* 2017. Monographs on invasive plants in Europe n°2 : *Eichhornia crassipes* (Mart.) Solms. Botany Letters, 164 (4) : 303-326.
- CABI. 2017. Invasive Species Compendium : *Eichhornia crassipes* (Water hyacinth). <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/20544>

Author: Doriane Blottière, IUCN French committee, for the Resource Centre on invasive alien species in conjunction with the overseas IAS initiative. March 2018. Published by the French Biodiversity Agency.

Classification

Order	Commelinales
Family	Pontederiaceae
Genus	<i>Eichhornia</i>
Species	<i>E. crassipes</i> (Mart.) Solms, 1883

