

# Invasive Water Hyacinth

*Eichhornia crassipes*



**Water Hyacinth's dense mat makes it one of Florida's worst aquatic weeds for both wildlife and recreation.**

The introduction of Water Hyacinth to Florida was in 1884 by a visitor returning from the Southern States Cotton Expo in New Orleans. By 1898, a 200-mile stretch of the St. Johns River was so clogged with the plant that it was no longer navigable by boat. Today, Water Hyacinth is found throughout the state, including in Pinellas County, and requires constant management to keep it under control. It reproduces both by seed and through short runner stems (daughter plants). A single Water Hyacinth can produce a daughter plant every 6-18 days, doubling its population in only two weeks!



*Suriname, Venezuela  
and Northeastern  
Brazil.*

## **NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

- **Damages fish populations** by lowering oxygen levels in the water, making it hard for fish to breathe and function
- **Reduces biodiversity** by shading out native underwater vegetation that wildlife depends on
- **Blocks waterways**, limiting boat traffic and recreation
- **Increases mosquito populations** that use aquatic plant roots to breathe and hide from predators



For more information, call (727) 464-7503  
or visit [www.pinellascounty.org/vegetation](http://www.pinellascounty.org/vegetation)

# INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

## Water Hyacinth



### DESCRIPTION

Water Hyacinth is a floating aquatic plant with a cluster of spongy, swollen stems and dark, feathery roots. The leaves are glossy and round, and plants are often connected by a smooth horizontal stem. Water Hyacinth produces showy year-round blooms in Florida. The lavender and yellow flowers open a few at a time from a stalk, making the bloom last for a week or more.



### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ! Avoid driving a boat through floating mats**  
Water Hyacinth can survive, reproduce and spread from the leftover pieces.
- ! Clean all mud and plant fragments from your boat**  
Water Hyacinth can spread by hitchhiking on boats and seeds can spread through mud.
- ! Never keep Water Hyacinth in your ornamental pond**  
Although it is illegal to sell, grow and transport, some sellers may still offer the plant. Get rid of any Water Hyacinth you already have by securely bagging and disposing of it in the trash. ■