

Pistia stratiotes

Scientific classification

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|---------|-----------------------|
| Kingdom | : Plantae |
| Clade | : Angiosperms |
| Order | : Alismatales |
| Family | : Araceae |
| Genus | : <i>Pistia</i> |
| Species | : <i>P.stratiotes</i> |



Description

Pistia is a perennial monocotyledon with thick, soft leaves that form a rosette. It floats on the surface of the water, its roots hanging submerged beneath floating leaves. The leaves can be up to 14 cm long and have no stem. They are light green, with parallel veins, wavy margins and are covered in short hairs which form basket-like structures which trap air bubbles, increasing the plant's buoyancy. The flowers are dioecious, and are hidden in the middle of the plant amongst the leaves. Small green berries form after successful fertilization. The plant can also undergo asexual reproduction. Mother and daughter plants are connected by a short stolon, forming dense mats

Uses

Water lettuce is often used in tropical aquariums to provide cover for fry and small fish. It is also helpful as it outcompetes algae for nutrients in the water, thereby preventing massive algal blooms.