

## Aquatic Weed Identification



Alligator Weed

American Lotus

Bladderwort

Common Salvinia

Alligator weed is considered one of the world's worst weeds, because it impacts both aquatic and terrestrial environments. This non-native species will grow in ponded and flowing waterways and on their banks, and on floodplains and poorly drained land. It will grow in a range of soils and substrates and can easily tolerate dry periods. Frost and ice kill exposed stems and leaves, but protected stems can survive these conditions and support the next season's growth.

American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) is a native species which grows in lakes and swamps, as well as in areas subject to flooding. The roots are anchored in the mud, but the leaves and flowers emerge above the water's surface. It has a large tuber and seeds that serve as a food source. However, American Lotus has established itself as a weed in some areas, spreading via creeping rhizomes and seeds.

True free-floating bladderwort is an annual plant that lacks roots but has yellowish flowers on erect stems above the water. The bladderwort's leaves often have a very delicate capillary appearance. Underwater, the leaf branches or petioles are inflated with air, which allows them to float. The underwater leaves include small oval "bladders" that trap and digest small aquatic creatures. Bladderworts are usually found in quiet, shallow, acidic waters and can form dense mats.

Common Salvinia is a cultivated plant that escaped into natural systems in the 1920s. Preferring a slow-moving, freshwater system, it can form very dense mats up to 10 inches in thickness, which can crowd out or shade out native plants. Salvinia is commonly spread through boat traffic in Louisiana waterways. Mechanical, chemical, and biological methods are used in order to control the spread of this plant.