Water Lettuce

Pistia stratiotes

Plant Height: 4 inches

Flower Height: 6 inches

Spread: 14 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Water Cabbage

Description:

This water plant has interesting square to fan shaped foliage that is velvety and beautifully ribbed; flowers are somewhat inconspicuous; excellent for edging a water feature or pond; watch for aphids; invasive in frost free areas

Ornamental Features

Water Lettuce's attractive tomentose square leaves remain bluish-green in color throughout the year on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. It features subtle chartreuse tubular flowers with creamy white overtones rising above the foliage from early to late summer.

Landscape Attributes

Water Lettuce is an herbaceous annual with a low habit of growth, spreading atop the surface of the water. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;



Water Lettuce foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Water Lettuce foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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- Spreading
- Invasive
- Insects

Water Lettuce is ideally suited for growing in a pond, water garden or patio water container, and is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Water Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Water Lettuce will grow to be only 4 inches tall at maturity extending to 6 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 14 inches. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the water. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. As an aquatic plant, it requires a suitable water garden environment and will benefit from special planting and ongoing care practices; consult one of our in-store experts for further details and instructions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Water Lettuce is a fine choice for the water garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. Note that when grown in outdoor pots and containers, aquatic plants like this one will require a special growing environment that meets their requirement for consistent moisture.