

Aquatic Plant Fact Sheet

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Giant Salvinia, Water Fern *Salvinia molesta* Federal Noxious Weed

Salvinia molesta is a small, free-floating, aquatic fern introduced from South America. It usually appears as branched stems with floating leaves attached in pairs. Floating leaves are light to medium green, often with brownish edges in mature plants and 1/2 to 1 inch long and wide, with a distinctive fold in the center. The upper surface is covered with dense, stiff hairs with distinct "egg beater" shaped tips.



Salvinia molesta can be differentiated from the less invasive *Salvinia minima* by the shape of the surface hairs. *Salvinia minima* hairs curve outward in a "T" shape. The occurrence of either plant is of concern please report all sightings so that a positive identification can be made.

Salvinia molesta, has invaded water bodies in parts of Texas and Louisiana, and has been seen aquatic nurseries in North Carolina. Giant Salvinia can



spread rapidly by fragmentation and can double its biomass in only a few days! It forms dense surface mats, which interfere with boating, fishing, and recreational activities as well as degrades water quality by reducing oxygen levels and displacing desirable plants species.

For additional information
visit our web site at:

<http://www.cropsci.ncsu.edu/aquaticweeds>