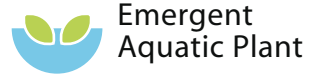


Water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*)



Grows in sheltered ponds and ditches



Made up of prickly and brittle leaves

Water soldier is a perennial aquatic weed that grows in sheltered backwaters, ponds and ditches in temperate climates.

Bottom rooted, the plant grows as a submerged plant over winter, floating to the surface during summer. Plants are made up of a rosette of deep green, sharply pointed, prickly and brittle leaves, similar to the foliage of an aloe, or a pineapple top. The two-leafed sheath at the top of each flower stalk resembles a crab's claw and in January contains several delicate white flowers with 3 petals.

Water soldier propagates itself freely by runners and seed.

Water soldier is not known to occur in New Zealand. This is an invasive weed, that could do serious damage to New Zealand's waterways. Any sightings should be reported immediately to your Regional Council.