

# Water Fern

*Azolla filiculoides*

The **water fern** is an aquatic plant native to the tropical regions of the Americas that was introduced in Europe for its ornamental use in ponds and aquariums, as a weed in rice paddies and for its use as a natural crop fertilizer.

Unfortunately, it has already reached Andalusia. Here it acts as a dangerous invader of fresh and saltwater wetlands of high ecological value such as the marshes of Doñana. In these ecosystems, it finds the ideal conditions for its development and, thanks to its great ability to propagate (by spores or by fragments), it forms dense mats (*monosperma*) or mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*), hoarding nutrients and space from our native species.

To **conserve the biodiversity** of our wetlands and avoid the economic damage associated to this species, the Consejería de Agricultura, Pesca y Medio Ambiente (Environmental Council) has launched the **Andalusian Programme to Control Invasive Alien Species**. The goal is to control the harmful populations of this species and create awareness among citizens of the danger of its use.





# What can we do to avoid its expansion?

**T**he most effective measure by far is **avoiding its ornamental use** in ponds and aquariums and never deposit it in water bodies, lagoons or rivers. Any small fragment or spore can prosper and generate a new population.

Water fern



*Azolla filiculoides*  
Tropical areas of the Americas

The introduction of water fern in the wild, its possession, transportation, traffic and trade of live or dead specimens and their propagules are **prohibited** according to National laws (Royal Decree 1628/2011).

The **early detection** of this water fern is very important for its successful eradication. Therefore, if you see it in any lagoon, marsh or canal, you can help by rapidly notifying the Consejería de Agricultura, Pesca y Medio Ambiente (Environmental Council).



*Invaded marsh*

## Contact

[exoticas.invasoras.capma@juntadeandalucia.es](mailto:exoticas.invasoras.capma@juntadeandalucia.es)



**Unión Europea**  
Fondo Europeo Agrícola  
de Desarrollo Rural



**JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA**  
CONSEJERÍA DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y MEDIO AMBIENTE