



Plate No. X—Control of Bank Grasses by Spraying

Eichhornia crassipes Solms

PONTEDERIACEAE

South American; naturalized in and often choking fresh waterways.

Aquatic herb; multiplying rapidly (three plants producing 3,000 in 50 days), forming a floating mass and sending long roots down to the bottom. Leaves roundish, 2 to 5 in. wide; leafstalk cylindrical with a basal, balloon-like swelling filled with light, crisp, spongy tissue. When rooted on muddy shore, stalks are straight and to 3 ft. high. Flower stem 5 to 16 in. tall, topped by showy spike. Flowers 1 in. wide, bluish-purple, 6-lobed, with upper lobe yellow in center.

Use: Young leaves, leafstalks and flower clusters may be thoroughly cooked and eaten. If eaten raw may cause itching, though a Miami doctor has reported that a lady patient liquefied water hyacinth leaves in her electric blender and partook of this regularly with no apparent harm.

Dr. Howard says the boiled flowers are gelatinous; the young inflated leaf bases, fried in deep fat, are "crisp like pork rind or popcorn."



EICHHORNIA CRASSIPES

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