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Stratiotes aloides

WATER-SOLDIER is an invasive submerged, semi-evergreen, aquatic perennial. Native to Asia and Europe (including Britain), it has some pinkish and some white flowers (the latter with many stamens).

It is also known as *Alaw Ddiosgo* (Welsh), Crab's claw, *Dyborre* (Swedish), Freshwater soldier, Knight's pondweed, *Krebsschere* (German), *Řezan pilolistý* (Czech), *Rezavka aloovitá* (Slovak), Sea green, *Vattenaloe* (Swedish), Water aloe, Water cactus, Water houseleek, Water parsnip, Water pine, and Water sengren.

The berry-like capsular fruit sink into the mud to ripen.

Aloides is made up of the genus name *Aloe* and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning 'like plants in that (aloe) genus'.

When abundant the plants are used locally as manure.

It could be said that water-soldier has played its part in promoting conservation of the environment in Britain. In early 1985 it was the subject of the first prosecution under that Country's Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Although water-soldier is not a protected species, as a wild plant it can only be uprooted by an authorised person there – and two aquatic plant dealers were not proved to be that. National broadcasts on radio, a local television programme and leading daily national newspapers all reported that the two men had been fined £250 and ordered to pay Court costs thus bringing the scope of the Act to wider public notice.

Movement i.e., shipment, of the plant in the United States is subject to restrictions because of its invasive nature when growing in conducive conditions.

For fishermen it would seem that water-soldier is a menace when well-established. Fish are unable to feed on any animals near its spiny leaves and when the plants die the leaves decompose so slowly that floating masses can silt up stretches of water.

Medicinally, it is said to have had a reputation in the past for healing wounds (especially those made by iron weapons) and it has also been recommended for treating inflammation.