

## Water hyacinth

(*Eichhornia crassipes*)

The pretty blue flowers of this Amazon river plant made it a popular ornamental plant throughout the world. It is now a problem plant in many countries including South Africa. Water hyacinth invades dams and slow-flowing rivers where it creates mats up to 2m thick. These mats reduce light and oxygen in the water and alter the water chemistry. Other aquatic plants find it difficult to survive. In turn animal life, dependent on a diversity of plant life for survival, dies out.

The increased evapo-transpiration from these plants leads to increased water loss from lakes and dams. The mats also interfere with their use by boaters and fishermen, as well as clogging intakes of irrigation, hydropower and water supply systems.

### Roodeplaat Dam, NE Pretoria



### Civic Lake, Benoni



### Vaal River, near Orkney



# Wicked water weeds



What are the country's  
worst invasive water  
weeds that are clogging  
our water courses?