

Summary of EPPO Prioritization process¹ for: *Azolla filiculoides*

In 2022/23, a number of species on the EPPO Observation List were re-prioritized with current information to assess if they should remain on the Observation List or be moved to another list. This is the prioritization summary for *Azolla filiculoides* where the outcome is the species should remain on the Observation List.

Section A. Prioritization process scheme for the elaboration of different lists of invasive alien plants (pests or potential pests) for the area under assessment

A.1 Is the plant species known to be alien in all, or a significant part, of the area under assessment?

Yes: *Azolla filiculoides* is native to North and South America (<https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/AZOFI>).

A.2 Is the plant species established in at least a part of the area under assessment? (if yes goto A5)

Yes the species is established in the EPPO region. The species has been widely recorded is considered established in numerous EPPO member states (<https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/AZOFI/distribution>; <https://www.gbif.org/species/2650107>).

A.3 Is the plant species known to be invasive outside the area under assessment?

A yes for question A.2 means this question is skipped.

A.4 Based on ecoclimatic conditions, could the species establish in the area under assessment?

A yes for question A.2 means this question is skipped.

A.5 How high is the spread potential of the plant in the area under assessment?

High spread potential with moderate uncertainty: The plant spreads by fragments, which are water-dispersed. Fragmentation and dispersal can also occur as a result of human activity.

A.6 How high is the potential negative impact of the plant on native species, habitats and ecosystems in the area under assessment?

Medium with a high uncertainty: *A. filiculoides* is an invasive plant principally in manmade waterways. Under favourable conditions, it grows to a thick mat blocking sunlight and blocking gas exchange of the waterway; block irrigation ditches and dams; replace native vegetation.

A.7 How high is the potential negative impact of the plant on agriculture, horticulture or forestry in the area under assessment?

Low with a high uncertainty: In tropical and subtropical conditions, *A. filiculoides* is a weed in rice paddies, where it traditionally would have a positive fertilizing effect as it binds atmospheric nitrogen. The species could impact on agricultural production in Italy, Spain and other areas of the EPPO region.

A.8 How high are the potential additional impacts (e.g. on animal and human health, on infrastructures, on recreational activities, other trade related impacts such as market losses)?

Medium with a high uncertainty: As a floating aquatic species, *A. filiculoides* has the potential to block access to water ways for recreation activities.

¹ EPPO (2012) EPPO Prioritization process for invasive alien plants. EPPO Bulletin 42, 463-474.

Outcome of Section A: *Azolla filiculoides* is included on the EPPO Observation List

| | | A5 -Spread potential | | |
|---|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Low | Medium | High |
| Adverse impacts (maximum rating from questions A6, A7 and A8. | Low | List of minor concern | List of minor concern | List of minor concern |
| | Medium | List of minor concern | Observation List | Observation List |
| | High | Observation List | Observation List | List of invasive alien plants |

Azolla filiculoides is not considered further. The assessment stops here.

B. Prioritization process scheme for the identification of invasive alien plants for which a PRA is needed

B.1 Is the plant species internationally traded or are there other existing or potential international pathways?

B.2 Is the risk of introduction by these international pathways identified to be superior to natural spread?

B.3 Does the plant species still have a significant area suitable for further spread in the area under assessment?

Outcome of section B:

Selected references

- CABI (2023) *Azolla filiculoides*. Available at: [Azolla filiculoides \(water fern\) | CABI Compendium \(cabidigitallibrary.org\)](https://cabidigitallibrary.org)
- <https://gd.eppo.int/taxon/AZOFI>