Eichhornia is a genus composed of eight species of aquatic herbs with free-floating, floating-leaved or emergent (erect or procumbent) growth forms. Some species (E. crassipes and E. azurea) possess the largest flowers in the Pontederiaceae, a family of approximately 35 species of freshwater macrophytes. Flowers of Eichhornia are weakly zygomorphic and possess tubular perianths, which can be blue, purple, lilac, mauve or sometimes white with conspicuous yellow nectar guides. The flowers are displayed in cymose inflorescences (simple cymes, thyrses or cincinnus), with numerous flowers, except for E. diversifolia and E. natans, which have 1-3 flowers per inflorescence. The androecium is composed of six stamens, inserted on the perianth in two groups of three, which usually vary in their length. The gynoecium has three carpels and is syncarpous with a trilocular ovary, axile placentation and numerous ovules per locule. The fruit is a loculicidal capsule and contains small oval-shaped seeds. Eichhornia flowers are primarily bee-pollinated and four species (E. azurea, E. crassipes, E. paniculata and E. paradoxa) exhibit the floral polymorphism tristyly. Species vary in mating system from predominant outcrossing in tristylos populations to high levels of selfing in semi-homostylous populations (E. heterosperma and E. diversifolia). The genus is principally Neotropical, except for E. natans, which is restricted to tropical Africa. The free floating Eichhornia crassipes (water hyacinth) is a serious invasive aquatic and in the past century has been dispersed by human activities and now occurs throughout the New and Old World tropics and subtropics. Eichhornia species occupy a wide range of wetland habitats including lakes, rivers, streams, seasonal pools, drainage ditches, low lying pastures and rice fields.
Genus *Eichhornia* Kunth (Pontederiaceae)

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