

AUSTRALIAN BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES STUDY



FLOODPLAIN FLORA

A flora of the coastal floodplains
of the Northern Territory, Australia

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Extract: Azollaceae

AZOLLACEAE

Aquatic, free-floating *ferns*; rhizomes flexuose, rooting at nodes. *Fronde*s in 2 alternate rows, numerous, 2-lobed; upper lobe thick and photosynthetic and containing blue-green algae in a central cavity; lower lobe submerged and thin and bearing megasporocarps and microsporocarps. *Megasporocarps* smaller than microsporocarps, each containing a single megaspore. *Microsporocarps* with usually many microsporangia, each microsporangium containing 4 or more groups (massulae) of microspores; massulae with or without barbed processes.

A monogeneric family, with the genus *Azolla* containing about six species and widely distributed throughout tropical to temperate regions of the world. Two species in Australia but only *A. pinnata* in NT.

Taxonomic reference: Andrews (1990).

AZOLLA Lam.

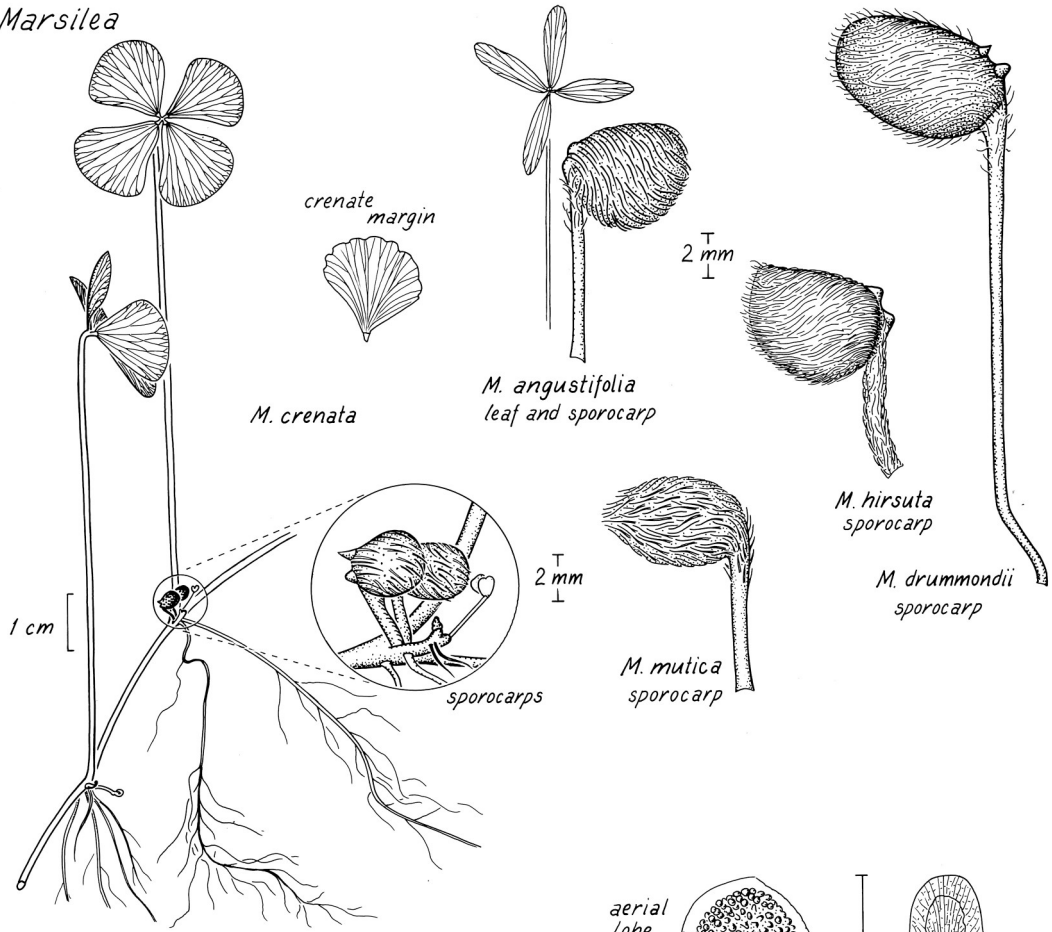
A. pinnata R.Br.

Free-floating, regularly branched *plants* more or less triangular in outline, to *c.* 3 cm long; roots of mature plants feathery. *Fronde*s with lobes *c.* 1 mm long; upper lobe green or reddish, upper surfaces papillate except for the somewhat membranous margins; lower lobe brownish and scale-like. *Massulae* more or less conical and basally with 1–6 unbarbed processes. Plate 3, Fig. 8.

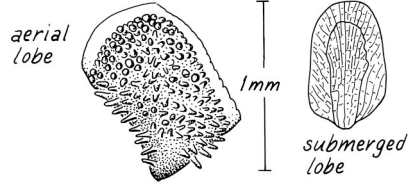
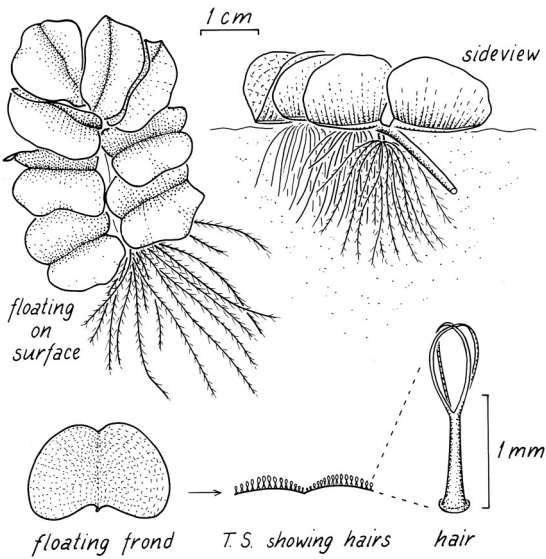
Asia, New Caledonia, New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia (NT, SA, Qld, NSW, Vic.). In NT confined to the Top End and common in still and slow-moving waters. Localities include Fogg Dam and floodplains of the Mary and Finnis rivers.

Plants are usually red or red-brown when growing on open water and greenish in shaded places. The species usually multiplies by fragmentation.

Marsilea



Salvinia molesta



Azolla pinnata

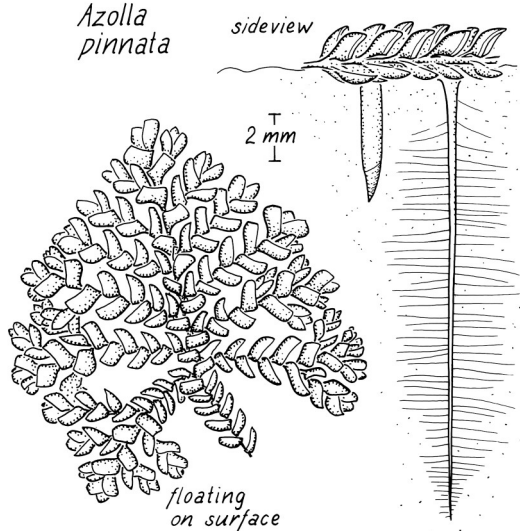


FIGURE 8