

## IDENTIFICATION GUIDE:

## Azolla

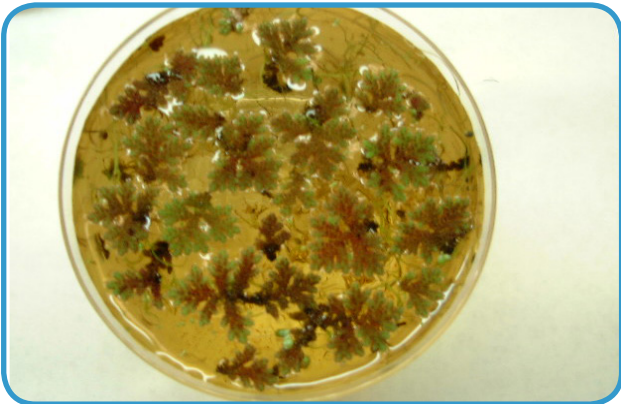
# fact sheet



*Azolla* covering Albemarle City Lake



Red and green velvety leaves of *Azolla*



Beaker of *Azolla*

### **Types:**

*Azolla* is an aquatic plant commonly known as Carolina Water Fern, Mosquito Fern, or Water Velvet.

### **Description:**

*Azolla* is a small floating plant with velvety red and green leaves and slender roots. The entire plant is only 1-2 cm in size. The leaves radiate out along small stems in multiple directions.

### **Habitat:**

*Azolla* can be found in quiet or slow moving waters throughout North Carolina and is most common in the coastal plain. They are more noticeable during the fall and winter months when their red growths cover ponds, ditches and small lakes. The small floating plants are easily moved about by wind or wave action and often collect in coves, along shorelines, and in mud. Growths are often mixed with other small floating plants.

### **Significance:**

*Azolla* growths may appear suspicious but pose no known human or environmental health risk. Their red coloring is thought to be an indication of nutrient limitation and/or aging of the plant.