

Ponds & Water Gardens May Spread Aquatic Invasive Species

Water - lakes, streams, creeks provide a peaceful calm that contrasts pleasantly from the fast pace of life. People enjoy water features so much, that the number of homes with new ponds and water gardens has increased significantly in the last few years. Materials to build water gardens and ponds are now sold at local nurseries, garden supply stores, hardware stores and of course on the internet. There are shapes and sizes to accommodate even very small yards and although permits are often required, many people are able to install everything themselves. In addition to private ponds, many neighborhoods are built with stormwater ponds which, unfortunately, some homeowners prefer to consider a decorative pond for their enjoyment. Populating these new aquascapes isn't a problem for homeowners either since a wide variety of aquatic plants and animals are available locally and via the internet.

This increased interest in water gardens and greater availability of aquatic plants and animals has also increased the risk (and occurrence) of the introduction of aquatic invasive species into our natural waterways. Much like the plants sold in terrestrial garden catalogs that arrive in your mailboxes shortly after the first of the year, some aquatic plants are proclaimed to be "*vigorous growers that will quickly fill in those bare spots*". Generally, there is no information to indicate that the "vigorous" plant is exotic or that it may be invasive. Every gardener should be cautious about a plant that can grow in many conditions and will grow quickly enough to fill a large area in one growing season, because these are also the traits that are most often attributed to plants that are invasive and causing problems.

Plant customers should never assume that their plant source, even if it is local, knows and sells only aquatic plants that are native and non-invasive. Buyers need to be responsible before purchasing aquatic plants by finding out the scientific name of any plant they want to order and doing their own research to make sure that they know exactly what they are buying. However, even when native aquatic plants are ordered, studies show that there is a good possibility that non-native, invasive plants and animals can be mixed in when the shipment arrives. When shipments arrive, they should be cleaned and examined for unwanted and potentially invasive hitchhikers.

Another pathway for aquatic invasive species involving water gardens and ponds is people transplanting aquatic plants from one pond to another. Often, a person will see a plant that is very pretty and just assume that it must be okay. Recently, this problem arose in a stormwater pond located close to a Walworth County lake. The plant in question is Yellow Floating Heart, *Nymphoides peltata* and there has only been one other private pond in all of Wisconsin where this aquatic invasive has been documented. How sad that Walworth County is documented as number two. So far, this exotic plant has not been found in the lake and the Department of Natural Resources is working to eradicate it from the stormwater pond. However, eradicating Yellow Floating Heart from this pond is expensive, labor intensive and there is no guarantee of success. Yellow Floating Heart can grow aggressively ("*vigorous growers that will quickly fill in those bare spots*"), and it is possible that it may migrate to the lake. If that happens, the costs associated with it will escalate and the chances for eradication will diminish.

Educational information about water gardening and aquatic invasive species is widely available on the web and from several agencies. Anyone interested in learning more can contact Audrey Greene, Walworth County Lake Specialist at 262-741-7902 or email agreen@co.walworth.wi.us. UW Extension and Wisconsin DNR are also an excellent source for educational materials, many of which can be obtained free by contacting Christal Campbell, Aquatic Invasive Education Specialist for UW Extension & WI DNR at 608-266-0061 or email at christal.campbell@wisconsin.gov.

In order to protect our water bodies, when planning, please follow these tips for water gardeners and pond owners:

- Build your water garden away from natural waterways ***check for required permits***
- Site your pond away from areas that flood into nearby lakes, rivers, and wetlands **check for required permits***
- Use native aquatic plants whenever possible. To learn more about landscaping with natives contact the County Lake Specialist, AIS Coordinator at 262-741-7902 or UW Extension Horticulture Educator at 262-741-4951
- Get to know which plants might be invasive and avoid planting them anywhere they might spread. Verify the scientific name of plants you purchase so you know for sure what you are buying.
- Abide by all laws governing aquatic species importation, sale, etc
- Carefully inspect purchases for "hitchhikers" before putting them into your pond
- Never release aquatic plants or animals near or into any water body

PLEASE DO NOT PLANT

Common Name	Species & Genus	Common Name	Species & Genus
Fanwort	<i>Cabomba caroliniana</i>	Pond water-star	<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>
Australian swamp crop/New Zealand pygmyweed	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Water Hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>
Brazilian Waterweed	<i>Egeria densa</i>	East Indian hygrophilia, Indian swampweed	<i>Hygrophila polysperma</i>
Hydrilla	<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	Water spinach, Swamp morning glory	<i>Ipomoea aquatic</i>
European frogbit	<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>	Dotted duckweed	<i>Landoltia punctata</i>
Oxygen-weed, African elodea African waterweed	<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	Limnophila, Asian marshweed	<i>Limnophila sessiliflora</i>
Parrot feather	<i>Myriophyllum</i>	Frog's bit, American spongeplant	<i>Limnobium spongia</i>
Brittle (Lesser, Bushy, Slender, Spindy, Naid) water nymph	<i>Najas minor</i>	Water shamrock, European waterclover	<i>Nasturtiumofficinale/ Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>
Yellow floating heart	<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>	Ducklettuce	<i>Ottelia alismoides</i>
Water chestnut	<i>Trapa natans</i>	Salvinia species	<i>Salvinia spp</i>
Flowering rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>		
Eurasian water milfoil & hybrid water milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum & hybrids</i>		
Curly-leaf pondweed	<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>		
Mosquito fern, water velvet	<i>Azolla pinata</i>		

Notes: 1.This is not a complete list. New exotic plants will always be made available

2.Plants may have other common names, so it is important that the Species and Genus are always used.

3.For more information on these and other species see:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/>

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>

<http://www.habitattitude.net/>

<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/cbcw/>