

Identifying Common Aquatic Plants

Many Highlands County residents live on lake front or canal property and see many different plant vegetation. This publication is designed to help homeowners identify those common aquatic weeds.

Native Plants:



Cattails have fleshy leaf blades stems that can grow 5 or 10 feet in height. Flowers form a dense dark brown, cigar-shape at the end of spikes.

Pickerelweed typically grows about 3 1/2 feet tall. Leaves are shiny green with a lance-shaped and up to 7 inches long. Each stem can produce a terminal flower spike 3 to 4 inches long that is violet-blue in color and last only one day. Sometimes the flowers are white.



Bulrush - There are several species of bulrushes. Bulrushes are grass-like plants that can grow 10 feet tall in shallow water or in moist soils. Stems are sharply-to softly-triangular

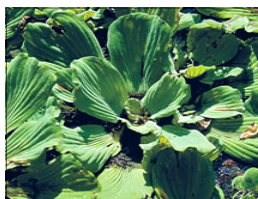
leaves, and bracts sometimes leaf-like or sometimes resemble the stems. Flowers usually occur just below the tip of the stem.

Spatterdock has large heart-shaped leaves that have a slit, and can float on the surface on thick round stalks. Flowers are yellow and half open at or above water surface and are attached to thick round stems that are often six feet long.



Duckweeds are very small, but very noticeable. There are four types of duckweed; Small duckweed, Giant duckweed, Water meal and Mud-midget.

Non Native Plants:



Water lettuce is a free-floating plant with many spongy, dusty green simple leaves. The leaves are covered in very fine hairs and arranged in a spiral pattern from the center of the plant. The leaves are 1 to 6 inches wide and have large veins running their length. Flowers are seldom seen.

Hydrilla is a plant that forms dense colonies and can grow to the surface in water over 20 feet deep. Hydrilla branches grow profusely and after reaching the surface it extends across it forming thick mats. Leaves are blade-like about 1/8 inch and 3/8 inch long with small tooth margins and spines on the underside of the midrib which make them feel rough.



Water hyacinth is a free-floating plant that can grow to a height of 3 feet. The green leaf blades are circular to elliptical in shape attached to a spongy, inflated petiole. Underneath the water is a thick, heavily branched, dark fibrous root system. It has striking light blue to violet flowers located on a terminal spike.

Wild Taro leaves are medium to large-size. They are arrow-head-shaped with heart-shaped leaf bases. The leaves can grow to two feet long. They are dark, velvety green and water repellent. Leaf stems grow to four feet tall. Flowers occur in small fingerlike spikes.



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