

A photograph of a wetland landscape. In the foreground, there is a path or stream bed with a small pool of water. The area is filled with various green and brownish plants, including tall grasses and shrubs. In the background, there are more trees and a hazy horizon. The text "Wetland Plants" is overlaid in a large, dark green, serif font.

Wetland Plants

Why Are Wetland Plants Important?

- Provides shelter and Oxygen
- Main food for waterfowl, amphibians, and mammals such as muskrats and deer
- Erosion control
- Breeding location for many animals
- Some used by people for food, tools, and medicine

Types of Wetland Plants

A photograph of a wetland area. In the foreground, there is a path made of dirt or sand, surrounded by dense green vegetation. In the middle ground, a small bridge or structure is visible, crossing over a narrow waterway or stream. The background shows more trees and a hazy sky. The overall scene is a lush, natural wetland environment.

- Grasses and Sedges
- Pondweeds
- Cattails
- Carnivorous Plants

Types of Wetland Plants

A photograph of a wetland area. In the foreground, there is a small pond with a wooden boardwalk leading to it. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and has a railing. The surrounding area is filled with dense green vegetation, including tall grasses and various plants. In the background, there are trees and a building, possibly a house or a small structure, partially obscured by the foliage. The overall scene is a lush, green wetland environment.

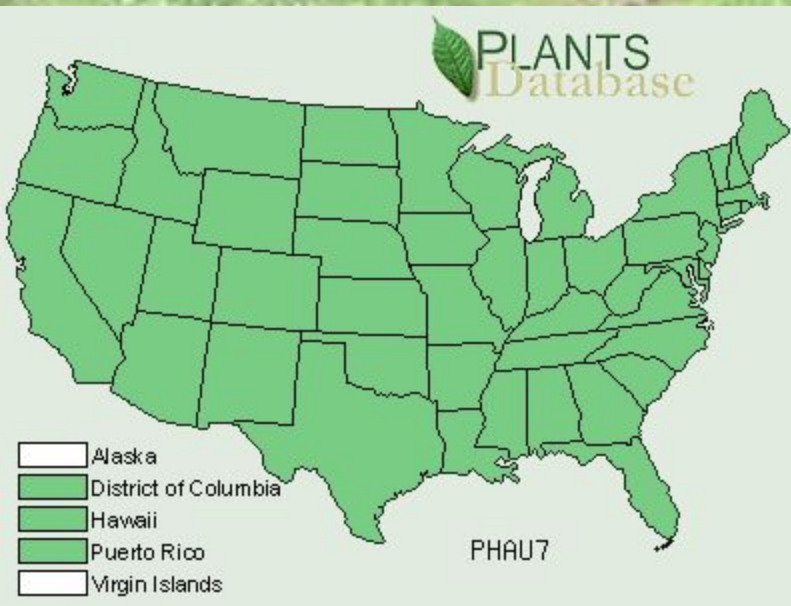
- Duckweeds
- Invasive Wetland Plants
- Miscellaneous Wetland Plants

Grasses

- **COMMON REED GRASS**
(*Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin.)
 - Found in marshes, meadows, fens, and lakes, sometimes in 6 ft. of water
 - Can form large, monotypic stands
 - Good winter habitat for white-tailed deer, ring-necked pheasant, and eastern cottontail



Common reed
Phragmites australis
Photo by A. Murray
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Grasses

- **WILD RICE**

(*Zizania aquatica* L.)

- Leaves go through floating stage before emerging
- Found in marshes, lakes, ponds, and streams from 1.5 – 3.0 ft.
- Fruit an important food for waterfowl and commercial agriculture



Grasses

- **WILD MILLET**

(*Echinochloa crusgalli* (L.) Beauv.)

- Naturalized here from Europe
- Grows in moist, poorly drained areas
- Widespread in all warmer regions of the world
- Nutlets important food for waterfowl

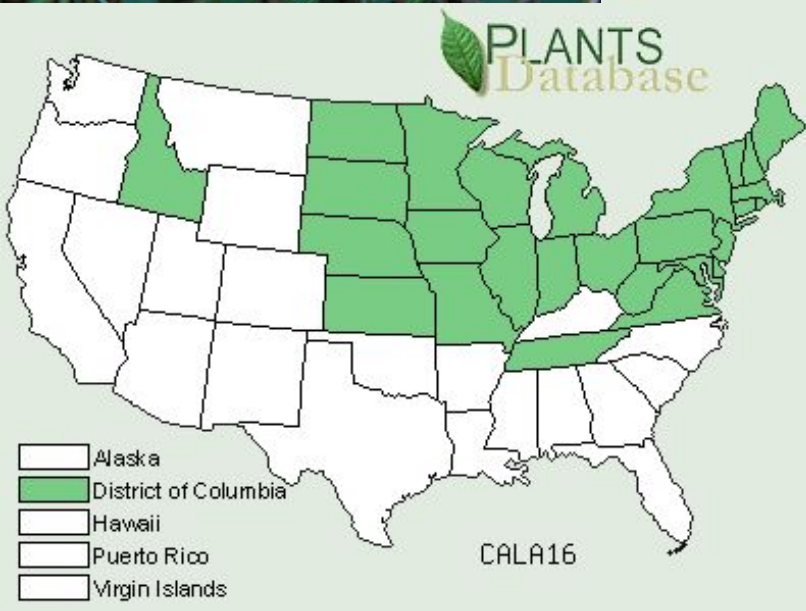


Sedges

- **LAKE SEDGE**

(*Carex lacustris* Willd.)

- Common and found in shallow water of swamps, marshes, lakes, and streams
- Forms scattered clones or beds
- Achenes eaten by waterfowl



Sedges

- **SLOUGH SEDGE**

(*Carex atherodes* Sprengel)

- Found in bogs, marshes, meadows, ditches, and river and lake edges
- Most common sedge of prairie potholes
- Birds use for food and nesting, muskrats eat roots, moose need for sodium when calving



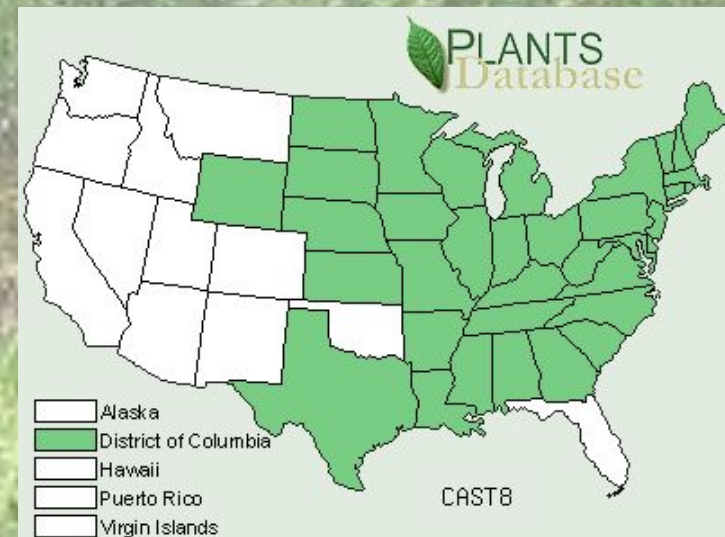


Sedges

- **HUMMOCK SEDGE**

(*Carex stricta* Lam.)

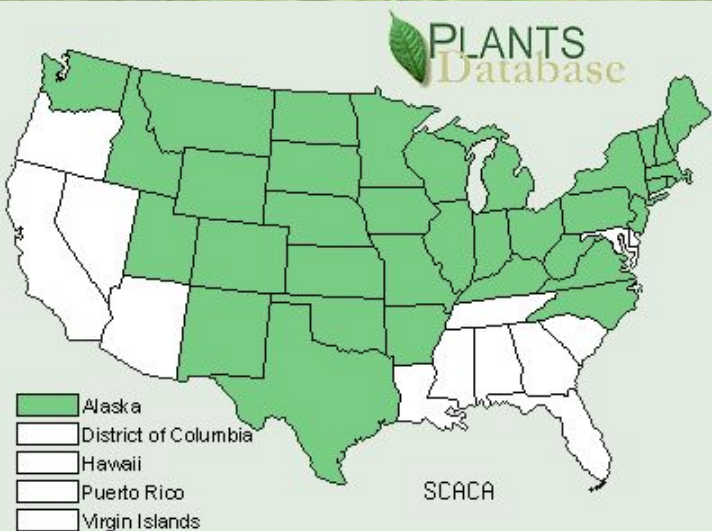
- Forms large tufts or hummocks
- Great nesting site for many species of bird
- Achenes eaten by Mallard, Wood Duck, Wild Turkey, etc.
- Also called Tussock Sedge or Upright Sedge

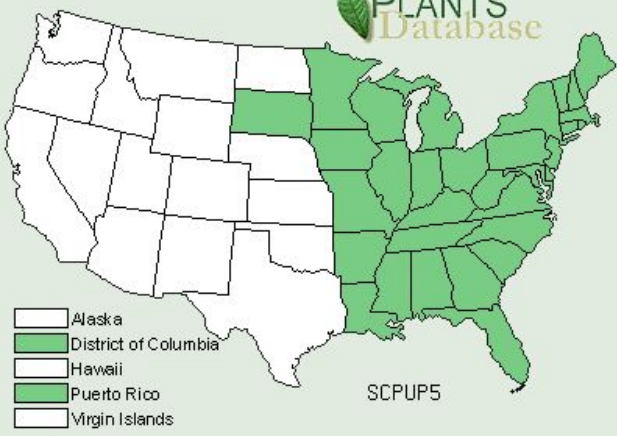


Sedges

- **HARDSTEM BULRUSH**
(*Scirpus acutus* Muhl.)

- Found in marshes and shorelines to 5 ft. deep
- Tolerates brackish water
- Native Americans used for food and household items
- Provides food, cover, and nesting habitat for waterfowl





Sedges



- **THREE-SQUARE BULRUSH**

(*Scirpus pungens* Vahl.)

- Grows in marshes, fens, and lake and stream borders in up to 2.5 ft. of water
- Entire plant eaten by geese and muskrats
- Stands are primary wintering ground for snow geese
- Many uses for people

Sedges

- **BLUNT SPIKE-RUSH**

(*Eleocharis obtusa* (Willd.) Schult.)

- Colonizes mudflats, shorelines, and marshes
- Commonly found in disturbed, saturated soils like farmed wetlands, created wetlands, or restoration sites
- Can use C3 or C4 pathways depending on stem submergence

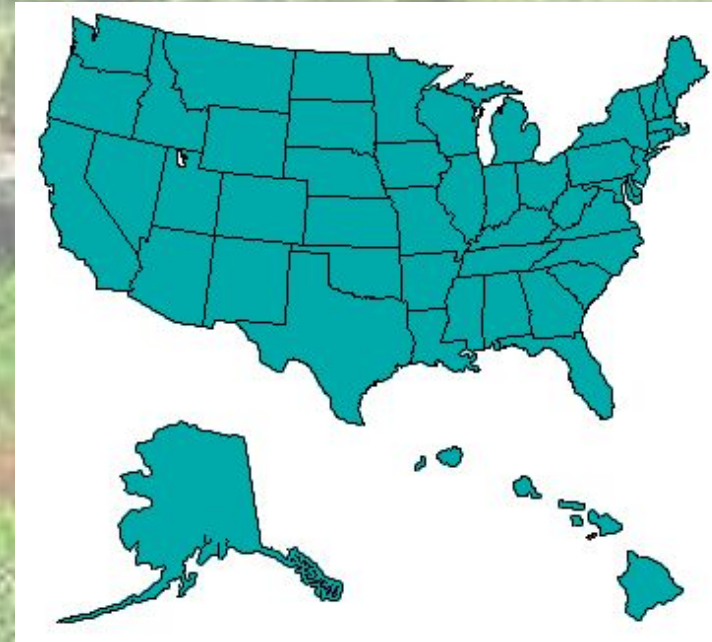


Pondweeds

- **SAGO PONDWEED**

(*Potamogeton pectinatus* L.)

- Found in marshes, lakes and streams usually at depths to 5 ft.
- Diving ducks rely on tubers as food source
- Dabbling ducks eat foliage and seeds
- Good fish habitat

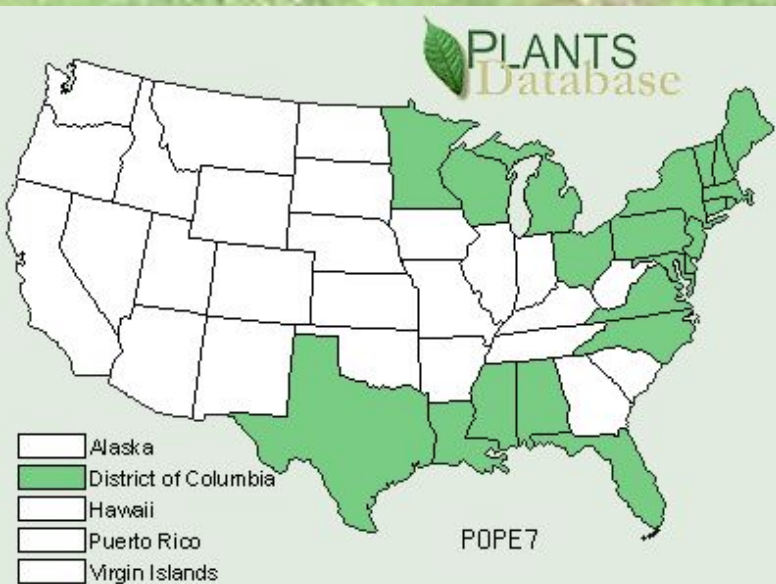


Pondweeds

- **CLASPINGLEAF PONDWEED**

(Potamogeton perfoliatus L.)

- Found in fresh to moderately brackish and alkaline waters
- Seeds, stems, and rootstock are food for redhead ducks, canvasbacks, mallards, black ducks, Canada geese and tundra swans
- Also called Redhead Grass

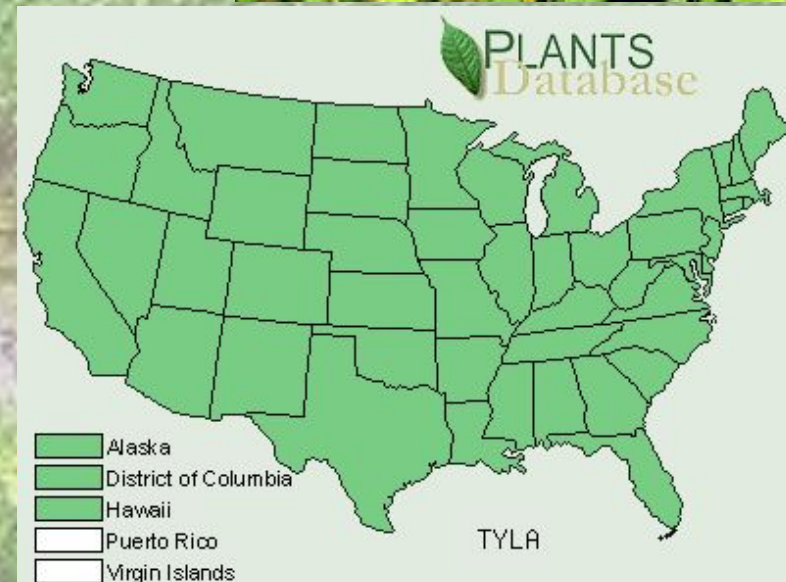


Cattails

- **BROAD-LEAVED CATTAIL**

(*Typha latifolia* L.)

- Grows in almost every wetland community
- Spreads extensively by rhizome
- Important food source for wildlife
- Also edible for people

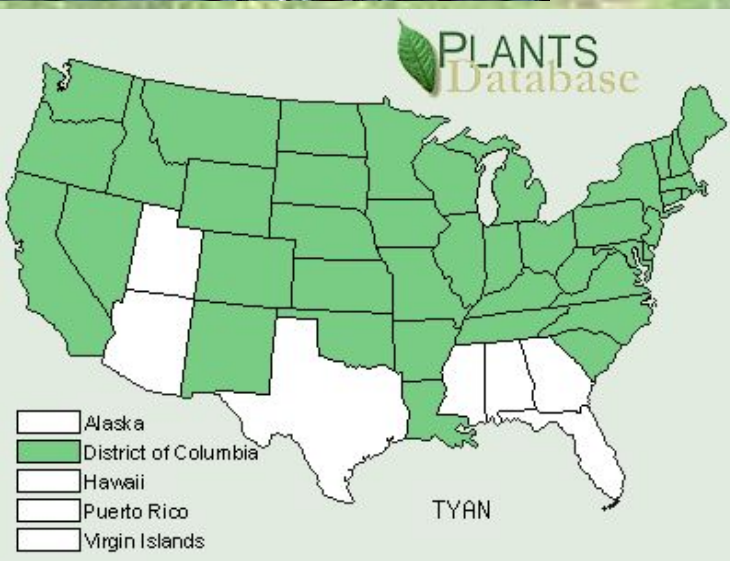


Cattails

- **NARROW-LEAVED**

- **CATTAIL** (*Typha angustifolia* L.)

- Similar to *T. latifolia* except that staminate and pistillate portions of spike are separated by 2 cm
- Broad-leaved and narrow-leaved cattail freely hybridize to form *Typha x glauca*
- Tolerates severe degradation of wetlands
- May be invasive and displace other plant species

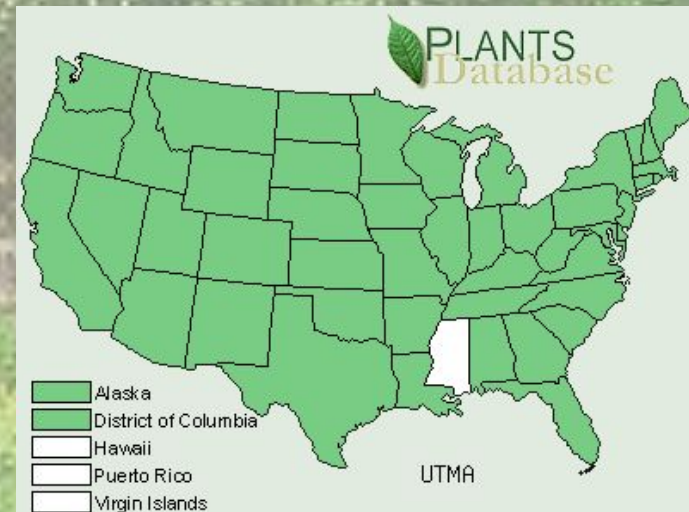


Carnivorous Plants

- **BLADDERWORT**

(*Utricularia macrorhiza* Le Conte)

- Found in quiet waters of lakes, rivers, and marshes
- Bladders have "trigger hairs" which, when brushed, cause the bladder to inflate and draw in the tiny invertebrate
- No known direct food value for waterfowl



Carnivorous Plants



- **PURPLE PITCHER PLANT**
(*Sarracenia purpurea* L.)
 - Found in bogs and some fens
 - Catches prey using lure of red lip
 - Inside pitcher has hairs facing down to prevent escape
 - Contains rain, dew, and a digestive enzyme
 - Meat not essential for survival



Duckweeds



- Consists of floating plants, without leaves
- Instead they have a flattened or globose frond
- Most reproduction is vegetative by budding
- Provides shelter and protection for aquatic animals, such as frogs, snakes, fish, insects, etc.

Duckweeds



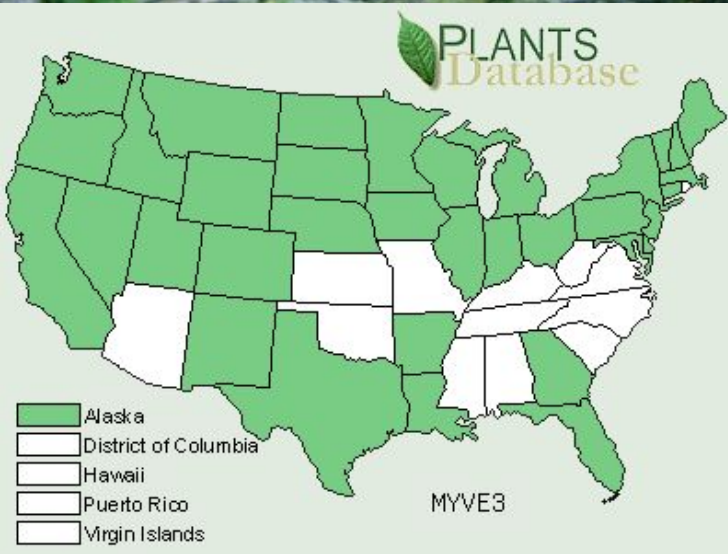
- World's smallest flowering plants
- Used for bioremediation of wastewater
- Can be bioengineered to produce therapeutic proteins
- Food source for many birds and fish, especially ducks
- Some species are **Common Duckweed** (*Lemna minor* L.), **Star Duckweed** (*L. trisulca* L.), **Big Duckweed** (*Spirodela polyrhiza* (L.) Schleiden), and **Watermeal** (*Wolffia columbiana* Karsten)

Invasive Plants

- **WATER MILFOIL**

(*Myriophyllum verticillatum* L.)

- Found in quiet waters of lakes, rivers, marshes, or muddy shores
- From Europe, Asia, and northern Africa
- Has less nutrient value than the native plant species it replaces
- Manage by mechanical removal or manipulation of water level

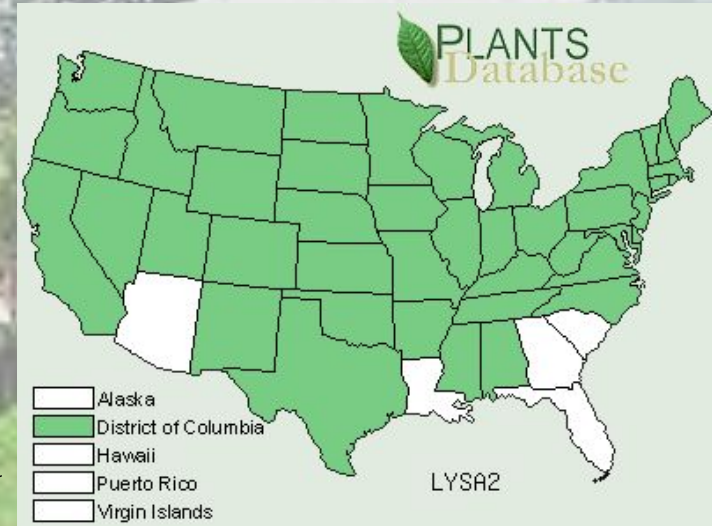


Invasive Plants

- **PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE**

(*Lythrum salicaria* L.)

- Found in marshes, meadows, and shores of lakes and streams
- Introduced from Eurasia for honey
- Reduces waterfowl food and nesting
- No appreciable wildlife food or cover value
- Mechanical removal or glyphosate herbicide (Rodeo or Roundup)

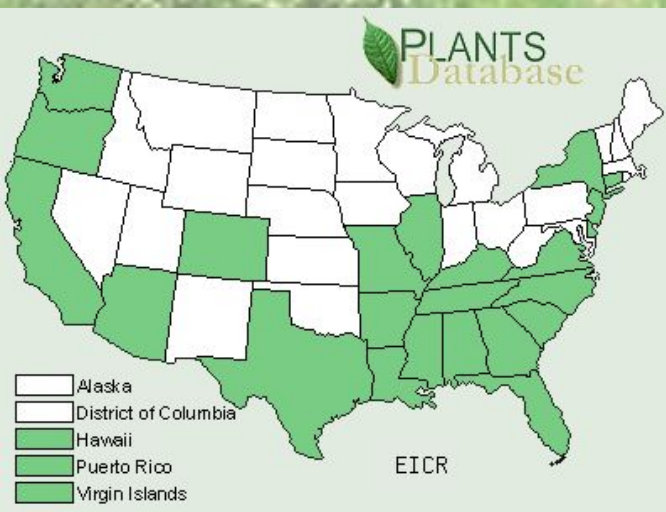


Invasive Plants

- **WATER HYACINTH**

(*Eichhornia crassipes* (Mart.) Solms)

- Grows in ponds, canals, marshes, lakes, and along rivers
- Native to Amazon basin
- Dense mats reduce light to submerged plants, depleting O₂
- Management includes mechanical removal, insect biocontrol (weevil), and aquatic herbicides (temporary)



Invasive Plants

- HYDRILLA

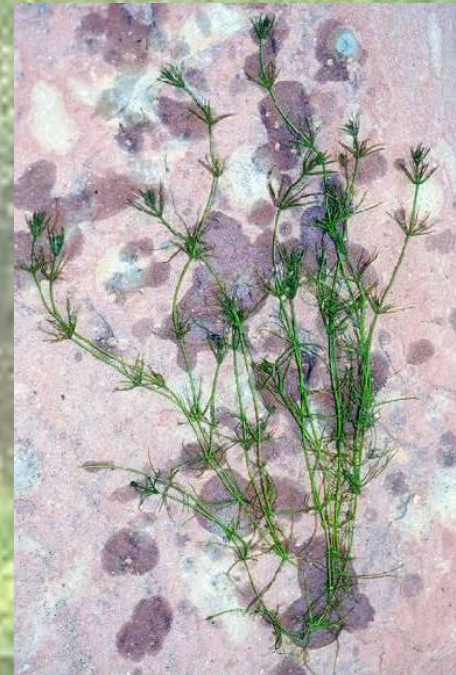
(Hydrilla verticillata (L.f.) Royle)

- Found in lakes, rivers, reservoirs, ponds, and ditches
- Native to Asia, Africa, and Australia
- Tends to form monospecific stands that can cover hundreds of acres
- Eaten by waterfowl and considered important food source by some biologists
- Manage by grass carp or dry hydrasoil



Misc. Wetland Plants

- **ELODEA** (*Elodea canadensis* Michaux)
 - Found in marshes, lakes, rivers and Mississippi River backwaters
 - Waterfowl, especially ducks, as well as beaver and muskrat eat this plant
- **MUSKGRASS** (*Chara vulgaris* L.)
 - Found in mineral-rich water
 - Important food for ducks
 - Common name comes from the strong, musk-like odor



Misc. Wetland Plants

- **WILD CELERY** (*Vallisneria americana* Michaux)
 - Found in lakes, streams and Mississippi River backwaters
 - Diving ducks rely on wild celery for food during migration and in their wintering habitats
- **EELGRASS** (*Zostera marina* L.)
 - Grow in shallow bays and coves, tidal creeks, and estuaries
 - Provides refuges for many species of fish and nursery areas for some



Misc. Wetland Plants

- **GIANT BUR-REED** (*Sparganium eurycarpum* Engelm.)
 - Shallow water in streams and lake margins
 - Excellent food and habitat for waterfowl
 - Muskrats and deer eat the entire plant
- **BROAD-LEAVED ARROWHEAD** (*Sagittaria latifolia* Willd.)
 - Habitats include ponds, swamps, lakes, and the shores of rivers
 - Nicknamed “duck potato” for edible tuberous root



Misc. Wetland Plants

- **MARSH MILKWEED**

(*Asclepias incarnata* L.)

- Common in several wetland communities
- Roots are eaten by muskrats
- Host plant for Monarch butterflies

- **BLUE FLAG IRIS**

(*Iris versicolor* L.)

- Common in meadows, marshes, and along streambanks and shores
- Rootstock fed upon by aquatic rodents
- Used in gardens for brightly colored flowers



Misc. Wetland Plants

- **PINKWEED**

(Polygonum pensylvanicum L.)

- Found in shallow marshes and disturbed areas
- Nutlets are important waterfowl and songbird food

- **Widgeon Grass**

(Ruppia maritima L.)

- Grows in shallow brackish water and in alkaline lakes, ponds, and streams
- Valuable waterfowl food sources
 - Entire plant has excellent nutritional value



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Summary

- Can be beneficial to the environment
 - Animals rely on them for food, shelter, and Oxygen
 - Control bank erosion
 - Used as breeding grounds for waterfowl and fishes
 - Useful for humans as food, tools, and medicines
- Can also have negative impacts
 - Monoclonal stands reduce plant species diversity
 - Invasives choke out Oxygen for aquatic animals
 - Reduce habitat and food (sometimes) for waterfowl