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All About Aquatic Plants

Water Lilies

Roots submerged, leaves on the surface and flowers on or above the surface.

Hardy Water Lilies (Nymphaea)

Zones 3 to 10. Lily pads help shade water, limiting algae growth. Blooms add color and fragrance to ponds. Most varieties need at least 3 to 4 hours of direct light to bloom well. Grow in medium to large ponds in containers which provide plenty of room for roots. Winter over at the bottom of your pond to prevent roots from freezing.

Floater

Roots submerged, leaves and stems free-floating on or just below the surface and flowers, if any, on or above the surface.

Water Hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes)

Zones 9 and 10. Fleshy floater with dark green leaves and occasional lovely lavender flowers. Prolific plants help purify water and balance pH, control algae, trailing roots provide spawning sites for fish. Grow in full sun, partial shade. Blooms summer.

Anacharis (Elodea densa)

Zones 5 to 10. Excellent oxygenating plant. Small leafy sprigs grow along the bottom of the pond. Tiny white flowers Helps control algae, provides food and spawning sites for fish. Blooms summer.

Frogbit (Hydrocharis morsus-ranae)

Zone 6. Small floater with fleshy water lily-like leaves. Grows in clumps. Good oxygenator for the small pond. Blooms summer.

Water Lettuce (Pistia stratoides)

Zone 10. Unusual furry and ribbed leaves. Looks like small cabbage floating on the pond surface. Tropical floater. Blooms summer.

Marginals

Roots submerged, leaves and flowers clearly above the surface.

Bog Plants

Roots in moist soil but not permanently submerged in water, leaves and flowers clearly above the surface.

Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

Zones 5 to 10. Native North American wetland plant with large arrowhead-shaped leaf. White apple blossom-like flowers. Prefers water depth of 3 to 6 inches over top of pot.

Blue Iris (*Iris versicolor*)

Zones 4. Narrow gray-green leaves. Falls are slate-blue with some yellow blotching. Blooms in early to midspring. Full sun or partial shade. Clump-forming habit. Height 1'.

Dwarf Cattail (*Typha laxmanii*)

Zone 4. Thin and delicate leaves with slightly curled tips. Strong vertical foliage and catkins. Small cattails only 1" to 3" long. Needs water depth of 4" to 12" to of pond.

Miniature Cattail (*Typha minima*)

Zone 3. Unusual small cattail. Very thin delicate leaves. Cattails barely 1" long. Good for specimen planting. Needs water depth of 1" to 6" over top of pot.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Zone 3. Lovely, prolific bloomer with bright red trumpet-like flowers. Prefers moist soil, but not flooded conditions. May need to be staked. Partial shade.

Chameleon Plant (*Houttuynia cordata*)

Zone 5. Variegated red, green and pale yellow groundcover with heart-shaped leaves. Delicate white flowers with green centers. Water depth 1" to 3" over top of pot. Full sun to partial shade.

Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus haspan viviparous*)

Zone 10. Tropical plant. Grows 12" to 24". Wispy leaf cluster at tips of thin stems. Flowers inconspicuous. Needs full sun. Water depth 1" to 6" over pot.

Dwarf Umbrella Plant (*Cyperus alternifolius*)

Zones 9-11. Umbrella-like whorls of green foliage atop short, hollow stems. Insignificant pompom-like seed heads. Graceful and slender plants grow 1-2' tall. Bring indoors during winter. Grow in moist soil or in water up to 6" deep.

Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*)

Zones 3-9. Slender hollow stems up to 4' tall. Good fine textured vertical accent. Grow in partial to full shade. Grows in wet soil or shallow water. Can become invasive; grow in containers.

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)

Zone 5-10. Single yellow flowers in spring/summer. Round deep green leaves with serrated edges. Grows 12" to 18". Plant in shade for continuous bloom. Water depth of 1" to 6" over top of pot.

Moneywort (*Lysimachia nummularia*)

Zone 4. Trailing stems small, round leaves. Clusters of bright yellow flowers all summer. Prefers sun to partial shade. Water depth 1" over top of pot. Blooms in summer.

Monkey Flower (*Mimulus ringens*)

Zone 5. Thick stems with small lavender blue flowers. Prefers water depth of 3-6" over top of pot.

Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)

Zone 4. Feathery blue-green foliage floats along pond's surface. A prolific bloomer. Blooms summer.

Pickerelweed (*Pontederica cordata*)

Zone 3. Shiny deep green, lance shaped leaves. Purple, blue or white flower clusters at the top of the plant. Prefers water depth of 1" to 6" over top of pot. Full sun.

Umbrella Plant (*Cyperus alternifolius*)

Zone 8. Tall, umbrella-like green foliage, with pom-pom like seed heads. 2' to 4' tall, good accent or background plant. Needs water depth of 1" to 8" over pot.

Variegated Sweet Flag (*Acorus gramineus variegata*)

Zone 7. Low growing grass like perennial with green and yellow striping. Inconspicuous cream colored flowers. Grows to 12". Full sun/partial shade. Water depth 1" to 6" over top of pot.

Yellow Flag (*Iris pseudacorus*)

Zone 5. Parrot green leaves accent stunning yellow flowers. Noted for its toughness, vigor and size. Prolific bloomer. Height 4'- 5'.

Floating Heart (*Nymphoides peltata*)

Zone 4 Miniature water lily-like leaves with buttercup-type flowers borne in small clusters. A useful plant for giving rapid surface cover.