



Water Gardeners

You can protect our environment by containing ornamental aquatic plants and animals in backyard ponds and water gardens. Non-native species can threaten the environment, local economies, and human health. The best method of control is the prevention of species introduction and spread; however, this requires awareness and informed decision making on your part.

Water Hyacinth

Eichhornia crassipes

Originally native to South America, this ornamental freshwater plant has been introduced to many regions of the United States including Hawaii, California, and



throughout the southeastern states including Georgia. This plant forms dense, free-floating mats of vegetation that can drastically restrict light penetration, deplete oxygen levels, and reduce water flow, which causes many problems for native fish and invertebrates. Clogged waterways also impair recreational boating and fishing activities.

Photo credit: Wilfredo Robles

Other water gardening related invasives include from left to right: Koi, Alligatorweed, and Purple Loosestrife.



Photo credits: Koi, P. Greenspun; Alligatorweed, C. Evans; Purple Loosestrife, John Byrd.

...the prevention and control of invasive species requires modifying the public's behaviors, values and beliefs, and changing the way decisions are made.

*— National Invasive Species Council's
National Management Plan 2001*



What Can You Do?

Become part of the solution to reduce the threat from invasive species by practicing the following responsible behaviors:

- Never dispose of unwanted plants or animals from your pond into local waterways, storm drains or sewer systems.
- Use native plants and animals, especially in areas prone to flooding.
- Seal aquatic plants in plastic bags, freeze for 24 hours, and dispose in trash.
- Return fish to the pet store.
- Give or trade with another person.
- Familiarize yourself with problem species and do not purchase these species.
- Check plants that you purchase for unwanted hitchhikers.
- Donate unwanted plants and animals to a local nature center, aquarium, school, or aquatic business.
- Contact your veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance about humane disposal of animals.

For more information on aquatic invasive species or to report an unusual sighting, please visit

www.marex.uga.edu/shellfish

