



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

BE PLANT WISE

www.gov.wales

**and help us prevent
the spread of invasive
aquatic plants**



BE PLANT WISE

IN THREE
SIMPLE STEPS

KNOW WHAT YOU GROW

Be plant wise to the threat of invasive plants, which can take over your pond and damage the environment. Ask for help picking the right plants for the size and purpose of your pond and ask how to care for them properly. Overleaf we detail some of the plants that can cause the most problems.

STOP THE SPREAD

Be plant wise by not moving pond plants around. Even tiny plant fragments can lead to massive problems, so be careful when maintaining your pond and disposing of waste water. Any waste water should be emptied away from streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and lochs, or drains that flow into them. You could use the excess water on the lawn or to water plants in your garden.

COMPOST WITH CARE

Be plant wise by disposing of aquatic plants responsibly. Don't dump them in the wild; this could be illegal and the plants could damage the environment. You should always dispose of plants by composting them or using your local green waste disposal system. **Never place them in a nearby pond or waterway**, where they can quickly become a problem. Before disposing of the plants leave them for a few hours beside the water, so that pond creatures can return to the water. Plants can be pulled out on a regular basis, but big clearouts should be saved for autumn when they will cause the least disturbance to your pond.

Why should you Be Plant Wise?

Ponds can turn a garden from good to great. They create a wonderful feature to be enjoyed all year round and are often a haven for wildlife. However, if they are not cared for properly some common pond plants can take over your pond. They can also become established in the wild, where they can smother our native plants, clog our waterways, exacerbate flooding and remove oxygen from the water, which can harm fish.

As well as being an important environmental concern, they also cost money. The annual cost of controlling just three invasive aquatic plants species in Great Britain is more than £3m.

Pond owners, gardeners and anglers can unknowingly assist the spread of aquatic plants into our countryside. These plants can rapidly become major problems. For example, one of the plants described in this leaflet, floating pennywort, can grow at a rate of 20cm a day.

Managing your pond responsibly

Whatever plants you use you'll need to manage your pond. That's because ponds, like gardens, must be maintained and cared for to ensure they don't become overgrown. But remember: when it's time to thin out your pond, always dispose of old plants and pond material responsibly by composting it or putting it in your green waste bin.

Don't give unwanted plants to friends and neighbours. You will just be spreading the problem and harming their ponds.

By doing something very simple, such as composting excess pond plants carefully, we can all help the environment and reduce costs.



A quick guide to five invasive aquatic plants

Here are five examples of invasive aquatic plants that you might find in your pond. If you do discover an invasive species, don't panic - just Be Plant Wise and remember to dispose of the plant by composting it.

New Zealand pigmyweed, also known as Australian swamp stonecrop

[*Crassula helmsii* - also sold incorrectly as *Crassula recurva*, *Tillaea recurva* and *Tillaea helmsii*]

Recognisable when growing at the water's edge by its narrow, fleshy leaves. However, it grows both in and under the water as well as on nearby land.

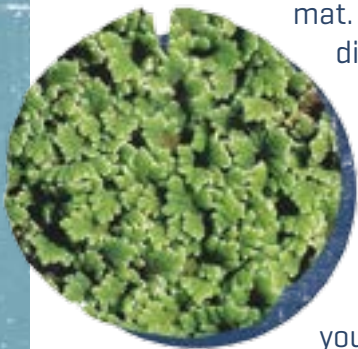
The weed's main danger lies in its ability to form very dense mats which reduce light levels and displace native plants. It can regenerate from tiny fragments and, as such, easily spreads to new areas.



Water fern, also known as fairy fern

[*Azolla filiculoides*]

This plant has tiny scale-like leaves no bigger than 2.5mm - forming small plants around 2.5cm long which can cluster to form a dense mat. It is green in summer but usually turns a distinctive red in autumn and winter.



When this plant completely covers a water surface it can be a danger to children, pets and livestock who may attempt to walk on it. As each individual plant is so small it can be transported on other plants as a contaminant. Always take care when buying new plants for your pond and make sure that water fern isn't already present on the plant.



Floating pennywort

[*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* – may also be sold as water pennywort or simply pennywort]

Identified by its shiny, kidney-shaped leaves with crinkled edges. Where it has escaped into the wild it is usually found floating on the surface of still or slow-moving freshwater.

It can grow up to 20cm a day, blocking out light and reducing the oxygen available to native species. By forming thick mats, which can look like dry land, it poses a danger to people and livestock.



Water-primrose

[*Ludwigia grandiflora*, *Ludwigia uruguayensis* or *Ludwigia peploides* – also sold incorrectly as *Jussiaea*]

With its bright yellow flowers this plant floats on the water's surface, as well as growing on the banks of ponds and rivers, and it blooms from July to August.

Water-primrose can become a thick carpet, outgrowing and overwhelming native species as well as clogging waterways.



Parrot's feather

[*Myriophyllum aquaticum*] [May also be sold as *Myriophyllum brasiliense*, *Myriophyllum proserpinacoides*, Brazilian water-milfoil, or simply as 'oxygenator']

It has bright green leaves [sometimes with a blue-grey sheen] that have a characteristic feathery appearance.

It is normally found growing as a marginal plant in still or slow-flowing, nutrient-rich water. It can grow into a thick raft which can compete with native plants and reduce oxygen in the water.



Choosing the right plants for your pond

There are many other aquatic plants available to buy that will still oxygenate your pond, provide shelter for pond creatures or produce lovely flowers. Please ask your retailer for advice about choosing plants which are suitable for your pond and not likely to cause a problem for the environment.

Remember to be plant wise and know what you are growing. Always ask for the scientific name to avoid inadvertently purchasing one of the invasive plants listed in this leaflet. For more information please go to **www.nonnativespecies.org/beplantwise/**

Remember all aquatic plants need to be maintained, cared for and composted with care. Be Plant Wise!

For more information on good alternatives, how to identify invasive plants and useful links, please go to www.nonnativespecies.org/beplantwise



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