

MARGINAL PLANTS, cont'd

Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus haspans*) **T** Grows to a height of 2' – 3'. Grows in a clump and foliage has round, brush-like balls on the end of each stalk. **D** 1" – 3"

Hawthorn Water (*Aponogeton distachyos*) **H** Spring and Autumn blooming. Fragrant white flowers are held above water. Oval, elongated, green leathery leaves float on the surface. **D** 3" – 8"

Iris, Blue (*Iris versicolor*) **H** This plant reaches a height of 24" and produces violet blue flowers that bloom in early Spring. **D** 1" – 6"

Iris, Yellow (*Iris pseudacorus*) **H** Bright yellow blossoms adorn this plant with sword-like leaves. This Spring bloomer grows to a height of 3'. **D** 1" – 6"

Lizard's Tail (*Saururus cernuus*) **H** Triangular foliage with unique, narrow, white spike blooms that resemble a lizard's tail. Grows to 2'. **D** 1" – 6"

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*) **H** Waxy looking, green round leaves. Bright yellow flowers in early Spring. Grows to 8". **D** 1" – 3"

Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) **H** Green, feathery foliage that trails over the water's surface. **D** 3" – 18"

Pickerel, Blue (*Pontederia cordata*) **H** Reaching a height of 3', this plant produces violet blue flowering spikes continually from early Spring to late Autumn. **D** 1" – 12"

Sagittaria, Narrow (*Sagittaria lancifolia*) **T** Reaching heights of 3' – 4', this plant has long stalks, produces large wide leaves, and clusters of white flowers. **D** 1" – 6"

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*) **H** Green, linear leaves adorned with an abundance of blue blooms make up this plant that grows well in shallow water or damp soil. Grows to 12". **D** 1" – 3"

Star Grass (*Dichromena colorata*) **T** Long, narrow, grassy foliage. Star-shaped white flowers on long stems. Grows to 18". **D** 1" – 6"

Taro, Green (*Colocasia esculenta*) **T** A member of the elephant ear family, this lush, green plant has big, leafy foliage and grows to 3'. **D** 1" – 12"

Umbrella Palm (*Cyperus alternifolius*) **T** Grows in clumps up to 6' tall with crowns of green, grass-like leaves at the tips. **D** 1" – 6"

Variegated Sweet Flag (*Acorus gramineus*) **H** Low growing (up to 12") marginal plant with green and white variegated leaves. **D** 1" – 6"

Water Bluebell (*Ruellia squarrosa*) **T** Short, green linear foliage. Produces many small bluebell flowers. Grows to 12". **D** 2"

Water Poppy (*Hydrocleys nymphoides*) **T** Has small, water lily-like pads that float on the water's surface. Yellow blooms rise 2" above the surface during warmer months. **D** 3" – 9"

MARGINAL PLANTS, cont'd

Water Snowball/Senegal Tea (*Gymnocoronis spilanthoides*) **T** Elongated, green linear foliage. Produces many small, round white flowers. Grows to 24". **D** 1" – 8"

FLOATING PLANTS

T = Tropical H = Hardy D = depth for crown of plant

Mosaic Plant (*Ludwigia sedioides*) **T** Floating stems of willowy foliage topped with yellow flowers all Summer. Needs to be potted. **D** 1" – 3"

Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) **T** Floating water hyacinths have glossy, waxed leaves set atop spongy leaf stalks. Flowers are on a single spike, usually blue to purple in color.

Water Lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) **T** Commonly known as "shell flower," this floating plant has pale green, shell-shaped leaves.

OXYGENATING PLANTS

T = Tropical H = Hardy

Anacharis (*Egeria densa*) **H** Anacharis has narrow, dark green, curled leaflets attached to long, branching stems.

Cabomba (*Cabomba pulcheri*) **H** The foliage consists of dark green bristles carried along the stems and produces small white flowers with yellow centers.

Eurasian Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) **H** Hair-like foliage traps debris. Good for fish spawning.

Many of the plant descriptions are from the 1998 Water Garden Plant Manual, Florida Aquatics Nursery. Numerous water gardening books are available with additional plant listings.



Water Plants Planting & Care

For more information about the Colorado Water Garden Society or other aspects of pond keeping along the front-range go to:

<http://www.colowatergardensociety.org>

or send an e-mail to:

info@colowatergardensociety.org

Written by Cyndie Thomas, originally published 2003
Revised by Jim Arneill & Edited by Dorothy Martinez 2013
©Copyright 1999 - 2013, All Rights Reserved

www.colowatergardensociety.org

Colorado Water Garden Society
<http://www.colowatergardensociety.org>
©Copyright 1999 - 2013, All Rights Reserved

A water garden needs more than water lilies for both aesthetic and functional reasons. Marginal plants, floating or surface plants, and oxygenating or submerged plants can enhance the visual appeal of your pond in addition to the ecology of your pond.

MARGINAL OR BOG PLANTS

These plants provide texture, color, and edge to the pond. It is best to plant all water plants in pots rather than directly in the bottom of the pond. This aids in maintenance by making the containers retrievable, thus making plant and pond cleaning easier. Marginal plants should be planted in individual containers of approximately 1 – 3 gallon capacity. A heavy rich garden soil should be used. Potting soil, compost, vermiculite, or perlite should not be used, as they float out and foul the water. Place dirt in the bottom of the pot to a level about two-thirds of the way to the top, add aquatic fertilizer tablets, and then tamp down the soil. Place the plant in the pot, spread the roots and finish adding soil until the roots are covered to within 1" of the rim of the pot, and then pack firmly. To discourage fish from digging in the pot you may wish to add ½" – 1" gravel. When adding aquatic fertilizer tablets, use 1 tablet for 1-gallon pots and 2 tablets for 2 – 3 gallon pots.

Marginal plants should be lowered to a depth of only 2" – 3" below the water surface. They grow out of the water and are usually found at the water's edge. Some plants only like "wet feet" and are not suitable for placement in the pond. These plants like to be completely moistened and then allowed to dry out.

Most water plants require at least five hours of direct sunlight each day for maximum growth. With newly purchased plants, it is important to remember Colorado's altitude. Most plants are shipped in from growers at sea level and will need to be adapted to our climate to avoid their leaves being burnt. Check with the supplier where you purchase your plants to determine if this is a factor.

The numerous marginal plants sold may be either hardy or tropical. Hardy marginals will withstand cold temperatures in a dormant state and re-grow from the root the following season. Tropical marginals require warm temperatures and generally do not tolerate any cold temperatures. What this means is, prior to the turn of Autumn to Winter, tropical plants need to be moved into a greenhouse or to a bright spot in the house. Many will thrive as houseplants. It is not necessary to put them in water as deep as they were in the pond. A saucer that will hold water is all that is needed. Keep the saucer full of water and do not fertilize plants during this "rest" time.

In the Spring . . .

When danger of frost has passed, usually the last week of May, plants can be re-potted and returned to the pond. Inside growth is usually weak and somewhat stretched. It is best to trim much of the Winter growth. This will encourage new strong growth throughout the season.

FLOATING PLANTS

These plants require no planting. These plants float on the surface of the water, with their roots hanging free to absorb nutrients, provide shade, and provide cover for fish. Floating plants desire tropical temperatures and cannot tolerate a frost.

OXYGENATING PLANTS

Underwater oxygenating plants may be added to aid in maintaining clean and pure water. These plants aid in the prevention of algae growth through absorption of nutrients and carbon dioxide through their leaves. They compete with single cell algae that cause green water. They also provide a place for fish to spawn and trap debris. Oxygenating plants can be allowed to float freely or be anchored in pots using gravel to hold them in place. The use of soil for planting is counterproductive, as it adds nutrients you are trying to remove with the plants. Do not fertilize for the same reason. A one-gallon pot is recommended. Completely submerge these plants to a depth of at least 12".

MARGINAL PLANTS

T = Tropical H = Hardy D = depth for crown of plant

Butterfly Plant (*Asclepias*) **T** Long, green opposing leaves. Produces clustered flowers in red, yellow, white, and pink. Grows to 24". **D** 0" – 4"
Bog Lily (*Crinum americanum*) **T** Long, dark green stalks with outstanding large, white flowers that bloom in Spring and Summer. Reaches heights of 24". **D** 1" – 6"
Broadleaf Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*) **H** Clusters of white blooms adorn this plant with arrowhead shaped foliage. Blooms early Summer through Autumn and reaches up to 2' in height. **D** 1" – 6"
Canna (*Americanallis variegata*) **T** An orange flower with large, green and yellow variegated leaves. Grows to 4' tall. **D** 1" – 6"
Canna Longwood Hybrids **T** True aquatic flowering canna hybrids. Large, elongated leaves. Grow to heights of 4' with abundant blooms in red, yellow, orange, or pink in Spring through late Summer. **D** 1" – 6"
Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) **H** Tall grassy leaves, produces brown catkins. Capable of reaching heights of 6'. **D** 6" – 8"
Cattail Dwarf (*Typha minima*) **H** A dwarf version of the cattail that grows only 12" – 18" tall. **D** 1" – 6"
Cattail Graceful (*Typha laxmannii*) **H** Grows to a height of 4' with long, slender, grass-like leaves. **D** 2" – 8"
Clover Water (*Marsilea mutica*) **T** Stems spread out across the pond topped with peridot green leaves, divided into four parts, as in a four-leaf clover. Needs to be potted. **D** 3" – 12"