

Elodea

Elodea is a genus of aquatic plants often called water weeds. Elodea is native to North America and it is also widely used as aquarium vegetation. The introduction of some species of Elodea into waterways in parts of Europe, the Australia, Africa, Asia, and New Zealand has created a significant problem, and it is now considered a noxious weed in these areas.

Elodea canadensis, sometimes called American or Canadian waterweed or Anacharis (a former scientific name) is widely known as the generic water weed. The use of these names causes it to be confused with similar-looking non-native plants like Brazilian elodea (Egeria Densa) or hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata). American waterweed is an attractive aquarium plant, and is a good substitute for Brazilian elodea since it is native to Washington's lakes, ponds and rivers.

American waterweed is usually fairly easy to distinguish from its more notorious relatives, like Brazilian elodea and hydrilla. All of them have leaves in whorls around the stem. However, American waterweed has three leaves per whorl, whereas hydrilla and Brazilian elodea almost always have more than three leaves per whorl. Brazilian elodea is also a much larger, bushy plant with longer leaves. American waterweed also looks very much like another native elodea, Elodea nuttallii, which generally has three narrower leaves per whorl.

The American waterweed lives entirely underwater with the exception of small white flowers which bloom at the surface and are attached to the plant by delicate stalks. It produces winter buds from the stem tips that overwinter on the lake bottom. It also often overwinters as an evergreen plant in mild climates. In the fall, leafy stalks will detach from the parent plant, float away, root, and start new plants. This is the American waterweed's most important method of spreading, with seed production playing a relatively minor role.

Silty sediments and water rich in nutrients favor the growth of American waterweed in nutrient-rich lakes. However, the plant will grow in a wide range of conditions, from very shallow to deep water, and in many sediment types. It can even continue to grow unrooted, as floating fragments. It is found throughout temperate North America, and is one of the most common aquatic plants in Washington.

American waterweed is an important part of lake ecosystems. It provides good habitat for many aquatic invertebrates and cover for young fish and amphibians. Waterfowl, especially ducks, as well as beaver and muskrat eat this plant. Also, it is of economic importance as an attractive and easy to keep aquarium plant.

Cells of elodea leaves are known for their vivid exhibition of cyclosis, or cytoplasmic streaming.

Elodea Canadensis

Common name:	Canadian pondweed	Family:	Hydrocharitaceae
Author:	Michx.	Botanical references:	17, 200
Synonyms:	Philotria canadensis ((Michx.)Britton.), Anacharis canadensis (Planch.)		
Known Hazards:	None known		
Range:	N. America. Naturalized in Britain[17].		
Habitat:	Slow-moving fresh water throughout most of Britain[17].		
Plants For A Future Rating (1-5):	1		

Other Possible Synonyms:	From various places across the web, may not be correct. See below.
	Anacharis canadensis var. planchonii[B,P] E. brandegae[P] E. brandegeae[B] E. ioensis[B,P] E. linearis[B,P] E. planchonii[B,P] Philotria linearis[B,P]
Other Common Names:	From various places around the Web, may not be correct. See below.
	Canadian Waterweed [L,P,B], Common Elodea [L],
Epithets:	From a Dictionary of Botanical Epithets
	canadensis = northeastern America; cana = grayed due to hairs;
Noxious, Invasive and Injurious Weeds	From UDSA PLANTS database, Weeds Australia , DEFRA Injurious Weeds
	Listed as noxious for: South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory (Aust).

Physical Characteristics

Perennial. . It is in flower from May to October, and the seeds ripen from July to October. The flowers are dioecious (individual flowers are either male or female, but only one sex is to be found on any one plant so both male and female plants must be grown if seed is required) and are pollinated by Water. The plant not is self-fertile. We rate it 1 out of 5 for usefulness.

The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It can grow in water.

Potting:

The Canadian Pondweed grows better in cooler water. In temperatures above 70° F, it becomes spindly. This plant can be grown under 8 to 10 feet of water and will easily reach the surface of the average water garden. This plant derives most of its nourishment from the water through its leaves; its roots serve mainly to anchor it to the bottom, therefore, they may be planted in sand or pea gravel as well as soil. They may be anchored down and just dropped into the pond or planted in containers of sand or gravel. If they are only floated in the pond, too much sunlight and air will kill it. If fish don't keep this plant in check, it will need to be pruned back to prevent it from choking other water plants and taking up swimming space for fish.