

Educating Citizens. Enhancing Stewardship. Creating Communities.

Guess The Plant

Answer inside



This is a very typical plant in Florida. It is found in ponds, lakes, and drainage ditches. It is characterized by the brilliant violet-blue flowers. It grows up to 6 feet in height but is usually much smaller. It blooms in the late summer and fall and spreads fast, given the right conditions. This is a common plant in our adopted ponds.

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What have we been up to?

Meetings

- Canterbury Chase
- Lake Sylvia
- Three Lakes
- Gardenia Lake
- Zack's Pond
- Gold Star Management

Plantings

- Hewitt Lake

- Lichter Pond
- Canterbury Chase
- Lake Sylvia

Cleanups

- Canterbury Chase
- Lake Sylvia
- Mayfair Woods
- Three Lakes
- Clearview Lake

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Invasive Species Spotlight: **Brazilian Pepper Trees: Destroyers of Native Florida Habitats**

Brazilian pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*)

This tree is the most aggressive of the invasive plant species found in Florida. The Brazilian pepper tree is a native of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. It was introduced to Florida in the late 1800's as the Florida holly. It has since colonized vast areas of Florida. Brazilian pepper out competes native plants and quickly grows into large monotypic stands. Brazilian Pepper can be easily identified by crushing the leaves and smelling them. If you smell turpentine then you have Brazilian pepper.

Some of the reasons that Brazilian pepper should be

removed from all Florida habitats and your pond:

- They reduce the diversity of wildlife by invading native habitats
- They crowd our shorelines and out compete mangroves for space, resulting in loss of fish habitat
- They are members of the poison oak, poison ivy, and poison sumac family. People that have allergic reactions to these plants may also have a reaction to Brazilian pepper.

The removal of Brazilian pepper can be very costly but is very beneficial in the long run. The Pinellas County Adopt-A-Pond program, with the help of

SWFWMD, has removed several acres of Brazilian pepper trees from our adopted ponds.

Reference: Tampa Bay Estuary Program website at www.tbep.org.



Pollution Solution: **Fertilizer: Good or Bad?**

Fertilizer is a very useful product and can make your landscape beautiful, but can also have a profound affect on any water body that it drains into.

Less is more when it comes to fertilizer use. Plants only use small amounts of fertilizer and the rest runs off, creating algae

blooms. Dense algae blooms can be very costly to remove and the dying algae may reduce oxygen levels in the water, which can cause fish kills. This pond has the potential to be more beautiful and healthy with some basic changes to landscape maintenance. This algae is growing because of the excess nutrients in the water. You can plant a buffer zone around your pond to help absorb some of the nutrients and prevent them from running into your pond. The more plants you have around your pond, the less algae you will have in your

pond.

The use of native plants will allow you to use less fertilizer since they are adapted to live in the soil that you already have. Your best bet is to look for fertilizers with zero phosphorous, like 10-0-10 formulations.

If your home has reclaimed water, then you do not need to fertilize your lawn. Reclaimed water has nitrogen and phosphorus in it. When irrigating with reclaimed water, make sure to adjust the nozzle so water does not spray into the pond or road. Reference: Florida Friendly Yards at www.swfwmd.state.fl.us.



Wildlife Feature: The Snake Bird **Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)**

The Anhinga or Snake-Bird is a common resident of Florida. They feed mostly on small fish and catch their prey by spearing it with their beaks. They are found in lakes, ponds, and coastal environments.

The Anhinga is a dimorphic bird, which means that the males and females look different from each other. The male has greenish-black plumage,

with silver-gray feathers on the upper back and its wings have long white plumes. It also has a black crest. The female anhinga is brown with a lighter brown head and neck. This difference can be seen from the pictures shown here. Both the male and female develop vibrant colors during the breeding season.

The anhinga is a water bird, but it does not have oil

glands to waterproof its feathers like most other water birds. This means that when it goes swimming, the Anhingas feathers get wet. This characteristic helps the Anhinga to dive deeper and chase fish underwater. However, when it is out of the water, it must spread its wings so they can dry. The Anhinga can fly with wet feathers but not as well. When you see an Anhinga is out of the water, it is usually seen in its characteristic pose with its wings spread. This information is from the Miami Museum of Science and Planetarium website at www.miamisci.org.



Adopt-A-Pond Star Pond **Hewitt Lake**



This pond was adopted in October 2005. It is a four acre lake located near 54th St. and 40th Ave North in St. Petersburg. When the residents came to us they had algae problems, wanted

to make their lake look better, and possibly add more fish to the lake. Greg Lewis is the pond representative and has been very successful at encouraging everyone to help with the clean-ups and planting events. AAP removed Melaleuca and Brazilian pepper trees from the property in addition to torpedo grass and wild taro. This lake group has received a lot of attention in the past year and is on the way to being independent. This is great since one of the AAP

goals is to help residents to the point where they can decide what they need and how to go about doing it.

We recently transplanted *Vallisneria americana* (Eel Grass) into the lake. It has been doing well as long as it is fenced in so the turtles can not get to it. We hope that the grass spreads and can help with the clarity of the water.

This lake has been one of the most successful AAP projects. We feel that this is because of the participation from all the residents on the lake.

Way to go Hewitt Lake!

January 2007

Schedule of Upcoming Events

- 01/01/07-New Year's Day Holiday
- 1/6/07-Three Lakes-East Cleanup
- 1/13/07-MLK Holiday, AAP off
- 1/20/07- Zack's Pond Cleanup
- 1/27/07-Gardenia Lake Cleanup
- 1/28/07- Meeting at Woodfield Community
- 2/3/07- Mayfair Woods Cleanup
- 2/10/07- Ripple Lake Cleanup
- 2/17/07- Rain Barrel Workshop at Pinellas County Extension Office
- 02/24/07- Lakes & Ponds Day!- Mark this day on your calendar and plan on joining us at Weedon Island in St. Petersburg.
- 3/2/07- Unity Church Pond Cleanup
- 3/3/07- Discovery Day at Boca Ciega Millennium Park
- 3/10/07- Tentative Winwood Warriors Cleanup
- 3/17/07- Pinellas Spring Cleanup, contact Keep Pinellas Beautiful to volunteer.

Please contact us if you would like to post your scheduled community event or if you need to schedule an event with our staff.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

6th Annual Lakes & Ponds Day

We are having our 6th Annual Lakes and Ponds Day on Saturday February 24, 2007 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This year, it will be held at Weedon Island Preserve's Cultural and Natural History Center located at 1800 Weedon Drive NE in St. Petersburg. For those of you who haven't attended before, this event is a free educational seminar. Past presentations have covered the following topics:

- What is a stormwater pond?
- Exotics and Invasives around our Lakes and Ponds

- Lake Tarpon Watershed Management Plan
- Shoreline Restoration
- Native Planting Designs

Come join us for a day of fun. You can learn how to identify native and non-native plant species around your pond and yard. Breakfast, educational materials, and free native plant samples will be provided.

For registration information, please contact us at adopt-a-pond@pinellascounty.org, arivera@pinellascounty.org, mharrison@pinellascounty.org or at (727) 464-3454. If you have

any suggestions or requests for specific information to be covered at a future Lakes and Ponds Day, please express your ideas to us!



Spotlight Plant: Gulf Muhlygrass (*Muhlenbergia capilaris*)

Description



A knee high purple haze in the distance may not be an atmospheric event, but the effect created by the wispy, purplish flower heads in a dense stand of Gulf Muhlygrass. This is a showy clump forming grass that can get to 3 ft tall and just as wide. The stems and leaves are wirelike and

unbranched, originating from a dense basal clump. (Muhlygrass does not produce runners). The purplish-red or pink inflorescence is a diffuse, silky panicle, 18 in long and 10 in wide, that stands above the wiry leaves. It appears in late summer and persists for 6-8 weeks. The ripe seeds that follow give an attractive tan color to the wispy plumes.

Requirements

Light: Full sun to light shade.

Moisture: Gulf Muhlygrass tolerates a wide variety of soil conditions from moist to dry, acidic to alkaline, and sandy to marly. Established plantings will not need supplemental watering, but the grass will get larger with

liberal irrigation.

Where to Plant

Gulf Muhlygrass is used in borders and perennial gardens where a fine textured foliage is desired to accent bolder specimens. It makes an excellent groundcover for areas with poor soils, or a refined specimen grass in natural gardens. Gulf Muhlygrass is tolerant of salt spray and poor soils. Once established, it needs no care. Muhlygrass is recommended for road shoulders and medians. If you would like to learn more please visit www.floridata.com.

Guess The Plant Answer
Pickerel Weed (Pontederia cordata)

Adopt-A-Pond Word Search

Algae	S	T	G	H	P	U	P	K	I	O	F	R	V
Alligator	T	D	D	F	O	L	R	O	A	Z	Y	E	T
Anhinga	O	M	J	U	L	K	A	G	N	J	L	V	U
Bluegill	R	A	G	T	L	E	C	N	V	D	L	G	R
Duckweed	M	A	N	X	U	V	S	G	T	R	I	N	T
Fertilizer	W	A	V	H	T	H	S	K	L	S	L	H	L
Fish	A	I	G	A	I	A	A	I	S	J	R	I	E
Grass Carp	T	G	L	S	O	N	R	O	D	G	E	A	M
Habitat	E	V	R	D	N	V	G	K	F	S	T	N	E
Hibiscus	R	F	E	F	L	B	F	A	G	H	A	K	Q
Invasive	F	D	D	G	L	I	G	G	G	A	W	L	I
Lake	D	U	Q	G	P	Q	F	Y	T	D	I	O	M
Nutrients	S	J	A	T	T	I	M	E	B	E	O	P	A
Phosphorus	S	H	A	B	I	T	A	T	B	O	K	O	G
Plants	C	I	N	V	A	S	I	V	E	A	G	L	A
Pollution	A	L	L	I	G	A	T	O	R	C	T	L	Y
Pond	L	F	F	O	N	U	R	I	G	G	B	I	P
Run-off	S	S	U	T	O	G	E	O	S	Y	C	G	H
Shade	A	T	F	E	R	T	Z	L	I	J	U	E	O
Stormwater	Q	N	I	U	A	H	I	B	I	S	C	U	S
Sun	Y	E	O	P	T	X	L	T	I	J	J	L	P
Turtle	T	I	K	O	D	A	I	A	O	I	U	B	H
Water Lilly	H	R	L	Q	L	Q	T	B	K	O	M	G	O
Wild Taro	G	T	O	W	I	P	R	C	C	E	N	V	R
	D	U	C	K	W	E	E	D	J	S	A	U	U
	N	N	F	I	S	H	F	L	Y	E	D	E	S

Why Use Native Plants?

Five reasons to use native plants

1. True Florida Landscapes

Landscape can be defined as “the traits, patterns, and structure of a specific geographic area, including its biological composition.” In Florida, many of the landscapes you see have plants that are not from Florida and are not Florida landscapes. Pay close attention to the plants that you put in your yards and ponds and use native Florida plants to try and keep Florida as natural as possible.

2. Low Maintenance

Using native plants will reduce your maintenance time. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and need less care than non native plants. Less time in the garden means more free time for you to do other things that you would rather be doing than yard work.

3. Save Water

Local Florida plants need much less water than non native plants. They are adapted to the wet and dry season here in Florida and do not need to be watered, unless there is an excessive dry period. One of the most disappointing sites to see is sprinkler systems running when it is raining outside. Saving water saves money and conserves a vital resource.

4. Freedom from Pesticides

Our native plants have had many years to evolve defenses against pests. This means they need very little, if any, pesticides. Use as little pesticide as possible and in small amounts, only when pests are present.

5. Birds and Butterflies

Most of the plants that are best at attracting hummingbirds, butterflies, and other beautiful creatures are the plants that have attracted them for thousands of years, our native Florida plants.

Reference: Chayet, Debbie. Why Choose Native Plants For Your Landscape? July 2005.

Photo: Adopted pond Carriage Bay Lake, May 2006, wildflower buffer zone.



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Interesting Websites

Pinellas County Government: <http://www.pinellascounty.org>

SWFWMD: <http://www.watermatters.org>

Plant Management in Florida Waters: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/guide>