

Subject: Huntington Trails Pond Plantings

Dear Homeowner,

The three ponds within Huntington Trails not only provide aesthetic value that contribute to all our property values, but also provide critical drainage that prevents our streets and properties from flooding. The Huntington Trails HOA is responsible for maintaining the ponds as mandated by state and local governments. Our ponds are over 30 years old and are prone to developing large areas of algae caused by "nutrients" that get into the water system (e.g., fertilizer and grass clippings). We've tried various control measures, largely spraying chemicals, but also installing aerators and introducing fish. Nonetheless it is getting increasingly difficult to control the algae, especially in the summer months. Unfortunately, dead and dying algae provides additional nutrients for more algae, a vicious cycle. Environmental specialists from the county, consultants and pond management companies have recommended the introduction of pond plants in order to improve the quality of the water and help with shore erosion. As a trial, we will be installing small areas of plantings in all 3 ponds. (The composition of each pond is different.) This trial is to determine the viability, the results, and the aesthetics of the plant installations.

On the following pages are photos and descriptions of the 3 plants recommended by Gulf Coast Lakes, our pond management company. The spread of these plants is limited because they cannot grow beyond certain depths. In other words, they can't take over the ponds like some plants can. Gulf Coast Lakes would maintain the plants as well as the ponds. If the trial is successful, the plan is to install more plantings in the 3 ponds over a period of time.

If you have any questions or comments, please call Robert Heldorfer, the Huntington Trails volunteer liaison with Gulf Coast Lakes, at 727-669-9370

The three plants recommended for our ponds are:



Pickerweed

Pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*) is an aquatic native plant found throughout Florida. This perennial is usually found in shallow wetland areas or around the edges of lakes and ponds. The aggressive habit of these plants helps stabilize the banks of natural water bodies and retention ponds.

In the home water garden, pickerel weed adds texture, height, and a harmonious flower.

Pickerel weed has shiny green lance-shaped leaves that emerge in the spring from below the water and eventually grow above the surface. Purple-blue 3 to 4 inch long flower spikes can be seen several weeks after the appearance of foliage. Each flower spike holds numerous tubular purple flowers. Individual flowers last only a day, but this repeat bloomer can be enjoyed from spring through fall.

Beyond its visual allure, pickerel weed serves an important ecological purpose. The submerged portion, as with all aquatic plants, provides a habitat for the micro- and macro invertebrates that ultimately become a food source for fish, turtles, and ducks. The flowers are known to attract butterflies and the seeds are a tasty treat for ducks.



Bulltongue Arrowhead

Bulltongue Arrowhead, *Sagittaria lancifolia* is native to Florida.. Its large leaves and conspicuous flowers can be seen growing in shallow-water habitats throughout Florida. It is easily recognized by its large, firm, lance-shaped leaves, which are typically 4 inches wide and up to 2 feet long. The leaf bases taper to the stem. The leaves grow as a fan-like rosette of underground rhizomes. The flowers are showy and white, with 3 petals. The flowers extend on thick stalks that are often a foot above the leaves. The fruiting heads contain many small hooked seeds.

Duck potato
Sagittaria lancifolia
Photo by Ann Murray
© 2001 University of Florida



spikelet can have up to 140 small flowers

Jointed spikerush

Jointed spikerush, *Eleocharis interstincta*, is found primarily in the southern part of our state. The erect stems of Jointed Spikerush grow up to 4 feet tall, from thick rhizomes. The stem grows to about a half-inch in diameter. Jointed spikerush has no leaves, but it does have long sheaths at the stem base. The sheaths are often tinged dark-red. The inflorescence of spikerush is a single, long, cylindrical spikelet at the tip of the stem. A single