

Water spinach

Ipomoea aquatica

Description

It is a popular cultivated green vegetable in China, India, Malaysia, Africa, Brazil, the West Indies, and Central America.

Habit

Herbaceous, creeping vine growing up to 9 feet long but can reach over 70 feet long. Can grow up to 4 inches per day.

Leaves

Alternate, simple, smooth petioles 1-6 inches long; leaf blades generally arrowhead shaped but variable, smooth (rarely hairy), to 7 inches long, with tips pointed; blades held above water when stems floating.

Stems

Herbaceous, hollow, trailing, with milky sap and



roots at the nodes; usually to 9 ft long but can be longer.

Flowers

Showy, white or pale pink to lilac in color; broadly funnel shaped, "morning glory" like; solitary or in few-flowered clusters at leaf axils.

Fruits and Seeds

Oval or spherical capsule, woody at maturity, about 1 cm (1/2 in) wide, holding 1-4 grayish seeds that are often hairy.

Habitat

Native to southeast Asia. Found in lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams.

Reproduction

By seed or vegetatively from fragments.

Similar

Other species of *Ipomoea* or *Convolvulus* such as field bindweed, sweet potato or morning glory have similar flowers and leaves, but lack the hollow floating stems.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand pulling if all fragments are collected and destroyed along with the use of aquatic approved formulas of 2,4-D or glyphosate.

Credits

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