

## Aquatic Plants—Their Value and Some Typical Problems

Plant Groups	Value	Problems
<p><i>Algae</i></p> <p>1. Phytoplankton— microscopic plants</p> <p>2. Filamentous--- floating or clinging thread or hairlike plants: (ex. <i>Spirogyra sp.</i>)</p> <p>3. “Rooted” Species--- attached to the bottom with no true roots; low growing, not generally over 2’ tall: (ex. <i>Chara</i> and <i>Nitella</i>)</p>	<p>Primary producers of the aquatic food chain; food for zooplankton which is critical to survival of fry stages of many fish; food for some species of fish and mollusks.</p> <p>Harbors aquatic insects which are important fish foods.</p> <p>Harbors aquatic insects, provides cover for small fish; solid stands keep other taller aquatic plants from invading; in a waterfowl food.</p>	<p>Creates “blooms,” making the water become soupy green, brown or reddish-brown depending on the type of algae; creates problems for fish and swimmers. May cause off-flavor of drinking water.</p> <p>Free floating and those clinging to rocks and plants may be unsightly, foul docks, piling and boat surfaces; messy for swimmers and slippery underfoot. May have foul odor.</p> <p>Strong smelling odor when crushed; frees fine black organic matter when detached.</p>
<p><i>Flowering Vascular Plants</i></p> <p>4. Emergents--- attached to the bottom with leaves extending above water. (ex. Cattails, burreed, rushes)</p> <p>5. Submerged--- attached to bottom, entire plant underwater, (ex. milfoil, pondweeds, <i>Elodea</i>).</p> <p>6. Floating--- free floating on water surface (ex. duckweed); submerged plants with large floating leaves like water lilies are often included.</p>	<p>Protects shoreline from erosion; is muskrat and waterfowl food; provides cover for nesting songbirds; vegetation is spawning area for some amphibians and fish.</p> <p>Harbors aquatic insects; provides hiding and nursery place for fish; vegetation is spawning area for amphibians and fish; provides some food for waterfowl.</p> <p>Harbors aquatic insects; duckweed is food for waterfowl.</p>	<p>Makes access to water more difficult; blocks view of water; usually restricted to water less than 2 feet deep; creates still water for mosquitoes.</p> <p>Interferes with swimming and fishing; fouls motorboat propellers; commonly don’t exceed 20 feet in depth, but can be found in about 30 feet of clear water (See Table 2) Fouls domestic and municipal water intakes.</p> <p>Interferes with swimming, water skiing, and fishing; unsightly; floats from area to area.</p>