

CURLY PONDWEED

Potamogeton crispus L.

Plant Symbol = POOCR3

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Uses

Wildlife: Curly pondweed tends to increase oxygen levels and produce substantial organic material in aquatic environments (Guard 1995). This pondweed shelters small fish and aquatic insects that provide food for larger fish and amphibians (Ibid.).

Status

Introduced into the U.S. Considered a pest by several sources. Please consult the PLANTS Plant Profile for this species and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Pondweed family (Potamogetonaceae). Curly pondweed is an introduced, fast growing perennial. The stems are flattened and somewhat branching, forty to eighty centimeters long and mostly one to two millimeters wide (Guard 1995). The leaves are simple, long, narrow and attached directly to the stem. The flowers are brownish and inconspicuous and usually occur from May to October.

Distribution: Curly pondweed has been introduced from Massachusetts to Minnesota, south to Virginia and Missouri (Tiner 1987). For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

This species has invasive qualities. Curly pondweed is commonly found in ponds, lakes, canals, pools and slow moving water of rivers and streams. This plant grows well in sandy, loamy and clay soils. It prefers acid, neutral and basic soil and can grow in very alkaline and saline soils. This species is not shade tolerant.

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: Curly pondweed seeds should be sown as soon as they are ripe, in summer or early autumn (Heuser 1997). The seeds lose viability quickly if they are allowed to dry out (Ibid). Prick out the seedlings when they are large enough to handle and increase the depth of water around the pot until the plants are covered by a few centimeters of water. Grow the plants in a sunny position in the greenhouse for their first winter, increasing the depth of water, as the plants grow larger. Plant them out into their permanent positions in early summer.

Management

Curly pondweed is an aquatic plant that can be used as an oxygenator of ponds. This species sometimes becomes a pest in waterways, lakes and reservoirs (Guard 1995). It is a fast growing plant in need of constant checking to make sure it does not overrun ponds, pools or canals.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Materials are available from wetland plant vendors. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office

for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

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References

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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