

FRIENDS OF THE CHICAGO RIVER

Plants of the Chicago River Watershed



Arrowhead **W**
Sagittaria latifolia *White flowers*
 Arrowhead is named for its arrow-shaped leaves. It's also known as duck potato, as its roots, when cooked, have a potato-like texture. It grows in open water.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Blue Flag Iris **W**
Iris versicolor *Purple & yellow flowers*
 This distinctive wetland flower is very large and showy. More commonly found in wet meadows and wood edges in the upper Midwest and New England states.
 Jennifer Anderson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Buttonbush **W**
Cephalanthus occidentalis
 Buttonbush will always be found growing in water along streams or ponds or in areas with moist soil. Attracts butterflies and provides food and nesting sites for birds.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Marsh Marigold **W**
Caltha palustris *Yellow flowers*
 The marsh marigold is commonly found in areas where competition from other plants is low. Root tea was used to induce sweating. Leaf tea was used as a laxative.
 R.A. Howard @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Knotweed (Smartweed) **W**
Persicaria pensylvanica *Pink flowers*
 Also known as pinkweed, this plant is considered to be a weed in agriculture. It is an excellent food plant for wildlife, such as ducks, bobwhites, rails, mice, and muskrat.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Swamp Milkweed **W**
Asclepias incarnate *Pink flowers*
 This plant is found along streams and in wet prairies with abundant water. It gets its name from its white sap, although this species is less sappy than other milkweeds.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Common Cattail **W**
Typha latifolia
 Distinctive seedheads have thousands of seeds and look like a hot dog on a stick. Common cattail is usually found in shallower water than narrow leaved cattail.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Pickeralweed **W**
Pontederia cordata *Purple flowers*
 Pickeralweed has glossy, erect, deep green leaves that are slightly heart shaped with distinctive swirling. It grows in shallow water and likes sun to partial shade.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Narrowleaved Cattail **W**
Typha angustifolia
 Native Americans made flour from cattail pollen. Narrow leaved cattail is actually an introduced species. It is harmless, though, and often hybridizes with common cattail.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



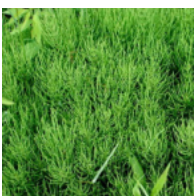
Blunt Spike Rush **W**
Eleocharis obtusa
 An annual wetland plant found in marshes and wet meadows. It has high wildlife value as food and shelter species. It prefers regular to semi-permanent flooding.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



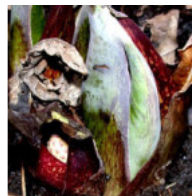
Marsh Primrose **W**
Ludwigia peploides *Yellow flowers*
 Primrose grows directly in the water. Its flowers are a delightful sunflower yellow. They grow as a very sparse trailing perennial with spots of yellow.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



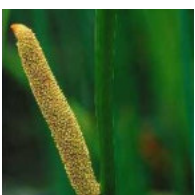
Path Rush **W**
Juncus tenuis
 This adaptable and tenacious plant can tolerate high levels of trampling. It likes wet areas, but can grow in just about any habitat that has enough water.
 Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Field Horse-tail Grass **W**
Equisetum arvense
 Horsetail grass has a high amount of silicon in its stem and was used to scour pots, polish pewter (hence the name pewterwort) and even to strengthen fingernails.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Skunk Cabbage **W**
Symplocarpus foetidus
 Skunk cabbage is quite often the very first plant to come up in the spring, sometimes even when the snow is still on the ground. They smell very bad!
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



American Sweet Flag **W**
Acorus americanus
 The fertilized flowers of this species produce berries with a jelly inside. The leaves have a citrus-like spicy aromatic quality, and can be used to flavor beer.
 Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Rice Cut Grass **W**
Leersia oryzoides
 This grass has sharp edges and can give some nasty scratches when walking through it. The rough foliage can cling tenaciously to clothing, flesh, or even fur.
 Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

P = Prairie **S** = Savanna **R** = Riparian/Floodplain Woodland **F** = Forest or Upland Woods **W** = Wetland
I-NN = Invasive Non-Native Species **I-N** = Invasive Native Species **X-NN** = Non-Native Weed **X-N** = Native Weed

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Water Plantain **W**
Alisma plantago-aquatica *Pale pink flowers*
 This is an aquatic plant rooted in the mud of lakes or slow streams, but with the leaves and flowers held above the water. The leaves are oval in shape.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



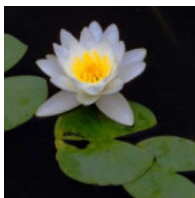
Virginia Creeper **R/F**
Parthenocissus quinquefolia *Purple berries*
 A prolific climber, reaching heights of 100 feet in the wild. Berries contain oxalic acid, which is poisonous to humans. It has beautiful deep red to burgundy fall foliage.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Lesser Duckweed **W**
Lemna minor
 Duckweed is the smallest flowering plant in the world. A single lesser duckweed plant can reproduce itself about every 3 days in ideal conditions in nutrient-rich waters.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Poison Ivy **R/F**
Rhus radicans *White berries*
 The oils of this plant can cause a nasty rash. It appears as a deciduous vine to short shrub and is generally found on tree trunks. It has distinctive leaves of three.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



White Water Lily **W**
Nymphaea tuberosa *White & yellow flowers*
 Water lilies flower above the waterline and are a partially-submerged water plant. The seed can be ground into a powder and used as a flour or fried and used like popcorn.
 Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Riverbank Grape **R/F**
Vitis riparia *Purple berries*
 Riverbank grape vines produce grapes, but they are VERY sour! It is long-lived vine and capable of reaching into the upper canopy of the tallest trees
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Sago Pondweed **W**
Potamogeton pectinatus
 Pondweed is a submergent plant, growing underneath the water's surface. There are about 80 species of pondweeds in the world. They are important as wildlife food.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Phragmites **I-N**
Phragmites australis
 Though this species is native, it can choke wetlands of available habitat. It spreads at up to 15 feet or more per year by horizontal runners, which put down roots.
 John M Randall, The Nature Conservancy



Common Water-milfoil **W**
Myriophyllum sibiricum
 Water-milfoil is a submergent water plant, and also known as short-spike water-milfoil. Eurasian water-milfoil (*M. verticillatum*) is an invasive non-native relative.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Purple Loosestrife **I-NN**
Lythrum salicaria *Pink/purple flowers*
 Purple loosestrife is beautiful but it is a terrible wetland invader. It forms dense stands that displace native and rare plant species and eliminate open water habitat.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Water-weed **W**
Elodea canadensis
 Water-weed is a submergent water plant, as it grows underneath the water's surface. It's what many people commonly think of as "that aquarium plant."
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Reed Canarygrass **I-NN**
Phalaris arundinacea
 This grass is an extremely aggressive invader in wetlands as it's very hard to control. Its use along ditches, canals and drains has created maintenance problems.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



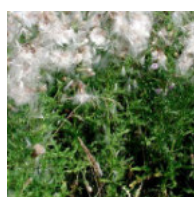
Coontail **W**
Ceratophyllum demersum
 Coontail is a submersed plant. It has no roots, and is free-floating. It is native to Florida. Its name comes from the feathery leaves resembling a raccoon's tail.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Mullein **I-NN**
Verbascum thapsus *Yellow flowers*
 Mullein invades prairies and wetland edges. The leaves of mullein are velvety, often being compared to a lamb's ear. The plant has been used to make dyes and torches.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Stinging Nettle **R/F**
Urtica dioica
 Stinging nettle has tiny hairs on its stem which can cause a painful burning sensation if touched. It is caused by formic acid which covers the tiny hairs of the plant.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey



Canada Thistle **I-NN**
Cirsium arvense *Purple flowers*
 Thistles are usually dioecious, but this one sometimes bears hermaphrodite flowers. The seeds are loved by finches. They can invade prairies, savannas and woodlands.
 Dan Busemeyer, Illinois Natural History Survey

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