

Native
Aquatic
Emergent
Plant

PICKERELWEED

Pontederia cordata



About

If Pickerelweed is present in your shoreland, you should know that it is an indicator of good water quality! This emergent macrophyte is found within shallow, quiet waters in the littoral zone. This species thrives in water less than 1 meter deep, in sandy or muddy substrates. Pickerelweed is very attractive in gardens and would be a great addition to any shoreland property.



Identification

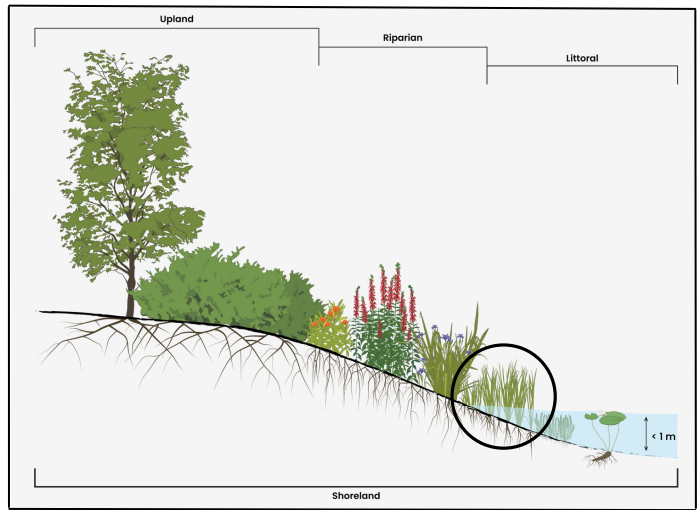
- Stems are upright, growing over a meter tall (half of the stem is usually submerged underwater)
- Leaves shaped as a heart
- Leaves reach 5 - 25 cm long and 15 cm wide; found at the base of the plant
- Flowers are showy and violet-blue in colour featured on a spike about 15 cm long
- Flowers bloom from the bottom up with individual flowers only lasting for a single day
- Flowers are small, reaching about 2 cm in width
- Thick root system, called rhizomes, often form dense colonies in ideal environments

References

Pickerelweed produced by the North American Native Plant Society
Grow me instead developed by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council
Purple Loosestrife created by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council
Wildflowers of the Adirondacks: Pickerelweed by Adirondacks
Forever Wild

Where is this species found in the shoreland?

Pontederia cordata is found in the littoral zone of the shoreland, as shown in the diagram. It thrives in water less than meter deep.



Did you know that the common name *Pickerelweed* could refer to Pickerel, the fish species? Many people link the name of this plant to the fish as its broad leaves provide habitat for aquatic species, like Pickerel. It is unknown why Pickerel stands out amongst other species that benefit from this plant!



Benefits

- Attracts pollinators including bees, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and hummingbirds
- Food source for various species:
 - Muskrats eat the stems
 - White-tailed deer and Canada geese eat the leaves
 - Waterfowl and shoreline birds consume its seeds
- Provides underwater habitat for invertebrates and fish
- Improves water quality by filtering aquatic contaminants
- Protects against shoreline erosion through dense root system



Don't weed me!

It is important not to confuse native species such as Pickerelweed with invasives.

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) looks similar to Pickerelweed because they both produce showy purple stalks of flowers. Purple Loosestrife differs from Pickerelweed as it has square-shaped stems and grows up to 2 meters tall. The leaves are oppositely arranged, and grow only 3 - 12 cm long.

The flowers are made up of 5 - 7 deep pink petals (reaching 10 mm long) with a small, yellow center.