

Edible Pond Plants

by Charles Otway – Terra Perma Education and Design - <http://terraperma.com.au/>

Kang Kong (Water Spinach) - *Ipomoea aquatica*



Is a semi-aquatic tropical plant grown as a leaf vegetable (very high in iron) that grows in water or on moist soil. Its stems are 2-3 m or more in length, hollow, allowing them to float and root at the nodes. It looks like narrow leaved sweet potato and is of the same family, sweet potato can be grown in water with the leaves harvested regularly as per Kang Kong. The plant dies back in winter but normally returns from the roots if it grew well in summer.

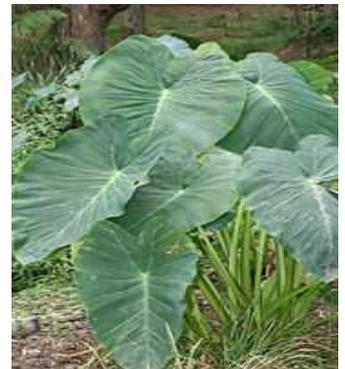
Chinese Water Chestnut - *Eleocharis dulcis*



The water chestnut, is a grass-like sedge grown for its edible corms. It has tube-shaped, leafless green stems that grow to about 1.5 metres. The small, rounded corms have a crisp white flesh and can be eaten raw, slightly boiled, grilled, pickled, or tinned. They grow over summer and die back to a corm in winter, harvest and keep some in moist soil over winter for spring planting.

Taro - *Colocasia esculenta* and others

Taro is a tropical plant grown primarily as a vegetable food for its edible corm, and also as a leaf vegetable. It is considered a staple in oceanic cultures. In its raw form, the plant is toxic due to the presence of calcium oxalate, and of needle-shaped raphides in the plant cells, although the toxin/crystals is destroyed by cooking or can be removed by steeping taro roots in cold water overnight.



Lotus - *Nelumbo nucifera*



Lotus is an aquatic perennial the flowers, seeds, young leaves, and "roots" (rhizomes) are all edible. In Asia, the petals are sometimes used for garnish, while the large leaves are used as a wrap for food. The rhizome is used as a vegetable in soups and stir-fried dishes. Petals, leaves, and rhizome can also all be eaten raw but its recommended they be cooked.

Memory Herb (Brahmi) - *Bacopra monniera*

It has small white flowers in Summer and Autumn, and will withstand light frosts. An edge of the pond plant it can tolerate submerged soil but not plant/leaves. Edible and very beneficial herb eaten in small amounts everyday.



Lebanese Cress - *Aethionema cordifolium*



Vigorous grower all year and eat it or compost before it chokes up your pond. It's a great source of greens for salads and great flavor for soups. Best grown in shade in summer.

Penny Royal - *Mentha pulegium*

A highly aromatic small leafed variety of mint. Commonly used as a cooking herb.



Vietnamese Mint (Luxa) *Polygonum odoratum*



A herb with hot coriander flavored leaves commonly used in Asian cooking. It is also a good ground cover in wet areas.

Cyprus - Papyrus sedge (*C. papyrus*) of Africa was of major historical importance in providing papyrus. *C. giganteus*, is used for weaving sleeping mats. The Chufa Flatsedge (*C. esculentus*) has edible tubers and is grown commercially for these; they are eaten as vegetables.

Most cyprus roots are edible, but often too small to bother with.



Watercress - *Nasturtium officinale* - A familiar salad plant for sale in greengrocers etc. It prefers growing in very shallow water (about two inches deep) but can also be found in marshy soils. It should be propagated by seed or by cuttings which will root easily and quickly in a container of water at any time of the growing season. As well as its leaves being edible, its seeds may be used as a mustard substitute.



Water Lily - *Nuphar alba and lutea* - Yellow:



It grows in water between one and two feet deep, preferring a sunny position. The roots are edible either raw or cooked, the leaf stalks may also be eaten, and a drink can be made from the flowers. In addition the seeds are edible, being ground up and used as thickeners in soups etc.

Pickerel Rush - *Pontederia cordata*

A perennial pond plant with glossy green leaves and spikes of attractive blue flowers in summer. The hyacinth-like flowers continue to bloom through the summer. Pickerel rush provides nectar for bees and butterflies and habitat for frogs. The nutritious, starchy seed can be eaten straight from the plant or dried and added to cereals, it tastes a bit like puffed brown rice. The seeds can also be dried for storage, then boiled, or roasted to improve the flavour or ground into flour. The young leaf-stalks can be cooked as greens or eaten raw in salads.



Nardoo - *Marsilea Drummondii*

It looks like a clover, and grows like a waterlily, but it's neither, it's a rare plant related to ferns. The unusual aquatic fern, Nardoo produces edible sporocarps. Nardoo caps contains an enzyme that destroys vitamin B1, the Aboriginal processing of wet grinding and then baking neutralises the toxic enzyme.

Water Mint - *Mentha Aquatica*

Leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. They have a strong peppermint-like fragrance. Best used as a flavouring in salads or cooked foods or as a herb tea.



Water Parsley and Celery - *Oenanthe javanica*, *Oenanthe sarmentosa*

Japanese parsley or Chinese celery are very similar plants, javanica being a little smaller and delicate. Both have edible leaves tasting as the names suggest, they are a great summer green when others are suffering in the Perth heat.



Gotu kola - *Centella asiatica*

Also known as Asian pennywort, this perennial with small kidney-shaped leaves is commonly found in warmer parts of Australia. Described as "a pharmacy in one herb", gotu kola contains vitamins A, B, C and D and minerals including calcium, chromium, cobalt, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, selenium, silica and zinc. Eat a few raw leaves daily.

