

# Pickerelweed

*Pontederia cordata*

-Pickerelweed has glossy heart-shaped leaves that emerge from a robust and sprawling rhizome. The leaves have long air filled stalk with firm blades. A close look at a leaf blade reveals many fine, parallel veins. The flower spike (5-15 cm) is crowded with small blue flowers. Each blossom has a tubular portion (5-7 mm long) that contains the nectar and flared lobes (7-10 mm long). The inside of the upper lobe is marked with golden spots.

-The fruit (5-10 mm long) has a corky, ridged surface and is shaped very much like an elf's hat.

-Occasionally plants with white blossoms have been reported. There is also a submersed form that produces narrow, ribbon-like leaves.

-The flowering stalk of Pickerelweed is a haven for many insects, some seeking nectar and others a spot to rest. Waterfowl as well as muskrats consume the seeds. Networks of rhizomes and leaves also offer shade and shelter for fish. Beds of Pickerelweed can be important shoreline stabilizers and help dampen wave action.



**Filthy water cannot be washed.**

**-West African Proverb**