



natural herbs

Water Hyacinth

Eichhornia crassipes

NATURAL

Medicinal herbs
Natural herbs



Latin names

Common names

Herb: Water Hyacinth

Latin name: *Eichhornia crassipes*

Synonyms: *Eichhornia speciosa*, *Eichhornia crassipes*

Family: Pontederiaceae

Edible parts of Water Hyacinth: Young leaves and petioles - cooked. Virtually tasteless. Said to be used as a carotene-rich table vegetable in Formosa. Javanese sometimes cook and eat the green parts and inflorescence. Flower spikes - cooked.

Description of the plant:



Habitat of the herb: Water courses. Moist and boggy areas at elevations of 200 - 1500 metres in Nepal.

Other uses of Water Hyacinth: Water hyacinths are potentially an excellent source of biomass. Through an anaerobic fermentation process, polluted hyacinths can be converted to the natural gas methane - a costly process that may become more economical as supplies of underground natural gas are depleted. Dried and cleansed plants can be used as fertilizer and plant mulch. Eventually, living aquatic plants might serve aboard long-distance manned spacecraft, absorbing wastes and converting carbon dioxide to oxygen, then being themselves converted into food. The plant can be cultivated for use in wastewater treatment, and can be incorporated into a system where the biomass is harvested for fuel production. Since this biomass is a by-product of wastewater treatment, it has a positive environmental impact, and thus poses no threat as competitor to food, feed, or fibre-producing plants. Wilted water hyacinth, mixed with earth, cow dung, and woodashes in the Chinese compost fashion, can yield useful compost in just two months. Although potential yields are incredible, so are the costs of removal or attempted eradication of this water weed. Standing crops have been estimated to produce 100-120 tonnes per hectare per year. Under ideal conditions, each plant can produce 248 offspring in 90 days. Water hyacinth roots naturally absorb pollutants, including such toxic chemicals as lead, mercury, and strontium 90 (as well as some organic compounds believed to be carcinogenic) in concentrations 10,000 times that in the surrounding water. In Africa, fresh plants are used as cushions in canoes and to plug holes in charcoal sacks.

Propagation of the herb: Seed - Seeds can tolerate submersion or desiccation for 15 years and still germinate. Scarification, but not light, may be required for germination.

Cultivation of Water Hyacinth: Water courses. Moist and boggy areas at elevations of 200 - 1500 metres in Nepal.

Medicinal use of the herb: None known

Known hazards of *Eichhornia crassipes*: Eating the plant, which is

reported to contain HCN, alkaloid, and triterpenoid, may induce itching. Fresh plants contain prickly crystals. Plants sprayed with 2,4-D may accumulate lethal doses of nitrates.

Plant information taken from the [Plants For A Future](#).

[\[natural medicinal herbs home\]](#) [\[latin names\]](#) [\[common names\]](#)

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