PLANT FACT SHEET

Pontederia crassipes Mart.

GENUS *Pontederia* **FAMILY** Pontederiaceae

COMMON NAMES Water hyacinth

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers, Vegetable, Ash - salt, Stem

The leaf stalks are used to sour soups.
The tender buds are cooked as a vegetable.
The flowers are used to prepare snacks.
CAUTION: The plant can cause itching. This is partly removed by cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A plant which grows in water. It is 45 cm tall. It floats and continues to grow from year to year. It has stolons or runners. It has rings of rounded leaves up to 15 cm across. The stalks are inflated and pale green. The roots are long and purplish and hang down. They hang 30-100 cm into the water. Roots are shorter when nutrients are plentiful in the water. The leaves are cup shaped. The flowers are pale blue or violet and have yellow markings on the upper petals. The flowers are produced in spikes. The flowers are 3 cm across and the spikes can be 15 cm tall.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. In Nepal it grows from 200-1500 m altitude. In Indonesia it grows up to 1,600 m above sea level. It grows in moist and boggy areas. It grows in pools and rice fields in S China between 200-500 m altitude. It grows in quiet or slow moving water. It grows in wetlands. Rapid growth occurs in nutrient rich water. It grows to latitudes of 40°. It needs plenty of sunlight. It is damaged by frost. In Argentina it grows up to 1,600 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants grow easily from offshoots of the plant. They need a temperature above 15°C and 30-40 cm deep water.

NOTES

There are 7-9 Eichhornia species. They are mainly in tropical America. It becomes a major weed problem in tropical lakes, lagoons and rivers. It can be very invasive.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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