

WATER HYACINTHS

Water Hyacinths are an unusual little plant, which is very popular amongst pond owners. They have peculiar puffed up hollow leaves that act as buoys to keep the plant afloat. It is one of the easiest plants to grow (besides weeds), because you simply drop it on top of the water and it will happily float around until it decides to flower. Then you are rewarded with the amazing delicate



beauty of bluish lavender coloured flowers with a yellow eye in the center.

And that's not all; water hyacinths have a highly-developed root system that filters out particles and draws nutrients out of the water. The end result is clear water and that is very desirable in the pond world.

Fish of course love these plants, because they provide shade cover for them to hide under. The mass of hanging roots creates the perfect substrate for the fish to spawn on. If you lift up the plants after the fish have had their fun, you will see the masses of small eggs clinging to the roots. Since Koi eat their own eggs as if they were a delicacy (like caviar), you have to move these plants to another pond if you want baby fish.

Water Hyacinths are also very prolific breeders and they do so by producing new daughter plants on runners called stolens. One plant could easily turn into dozens of plants during the season, but if you want the benefits of clear water in June, you need to buy enough plants at the beginning of the season. By August you may have too many plants, but its easy to scoop up the extras and put them in the compost. Don't allow them to cover more than half the surface, because it would adversely affect oxygen levels in the pond. One way keep them in check and control their free-floating wanderings is to make a "hoola hoop" out of 3/4 poly pipe and join the two ends together with a coupler fitting.

If you are having thoughts of going into business selling your extra water hyacinths, they are tropical plants and will not survive a Canadian winter, unless you keep them inside under high intensity lights which would cost more that replacing them in the spring.

So, include Water Hyacinths as a natural way to balance your pond and add a touch of the exotic.