



A GUIDE TO
MONTANA'S
FRESHWATER
AQUATIC PLANTS



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USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database/Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. *Alisma triviale* (Vol. 1:94), *Elodea nuttallii* (Vol. 1:105), *Heteranthera dubia* (Vol. 1:464), *Hippuris vulgaris* (Vol. 2:612), *Megalodonta beckii* (Vol. 3:500), *Potamogeton illinoensis* (Vol. 1:79), *Potamogeton filiformis* (Vol. 1:86), *Potamogeton foliosus* (Vol. 1:82), *Potamogeton natans* (Vol. 1:75), *Potamogeton nodosus* (Vol. 1:77), *Potamogeton obtusifolius* (Vol. 1:82), *Potamogeton pectinatus* (Vol. 1:87), *Potamogeton pusillus* (Vol. 1:84), *Potamogeton robbinsii* (Vol. 1:87), *Potamogeton vaginata* (Vol. 1:87), *Potamogeton zosteriformis* (Vol. 1:81), *Ruppia maritima* (Vol. 1:88), *Sagittaria cuneata* (Vol. 1:99), *Sagittaria latifolia* (Vol. 1:99), *Utricularia minor* (Vol. 3:228), *Utricularia vulgaris* (Vol. 3:229).

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PLANT CATEGORIES:

Plant-Like Algae

Plant-like algae lack stems and leaves, although sometimes they have structures that can be mistaken for stems and leaves. Plant-like algae are green with cylindrical, whorled branches. They lack roots, but some species attach to the sediment. Plant-like algae tend to lie on or just above the sediments. They are found from shallow water to very deep areas (20-30 meters) in clear water.



Floating Leaved, Rooted Plants

These plants are rooted in the sediment and have leaves that float on the water surface. They may also have underwater leaves. Often the stems of these plants are not firm enough to keep them upright when removed from the water and at low water they may be found collapsed on the lake bottom. They often form a bed along a lake margin in water 1-3 meters deep.



Submerged Plants

The entire plant is usually underwater, but the flowers and fruits may rise above the water surface. Submerged species are rooted in the sediment and have underwater leaves. They can grow from shallow water to depths greater than 10 meters in very clear water.



Free Floating Plants

Free-floating plants float in the water column, on the surface of the water, or lie on the bottom. This category includes some of the smallest members of the plant kingdom, such as watermeal plants, which look like green specks on the water surface. These plants do not root in the sediment, although some species have roots that dangle in the water. They sometimes form extensive green mats on the water surface.



Shoreline Plants

Shoreline plants grow along edges of lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds or on wet ground away from open water. They have at least part of their stems, leaves, and flowers emerging above the water surface and are rooted in the sediments. Some plants that typically grow in deep water may be found along the shoreline in late summer when water levels are low.

