



# Top 40 Bog Garden Plants Plants for Pollinators

Marshland, Aquatic, Peat Bog and Riverside plants  
with flowers to help our pollinating insects

**List Curated by Thomas McBride**

From research data collected and collated at the  
National Botanic Garden of Wales

NB: Butterflies and Moths are not studied at the NBGW so any data on nectar plants  
beneficial for them is taken from Butterfly Conservation





# Introduction



Water has long been a significant feature of UK Gardens; especially in West Wales and other regions with a naturally high rainfall. There are lots of temperate plants that prefer boggy, wet conditions which thrive in gardens that are regularly, or occasionally, flooded. Whether you have a garden with a deep pond, a garden on the edge of a river or stream, a garden that simply remains very damp all year, or are planning on making a proper bog garden, this list has you covered with the top plants to, not only create a great aesthetic, but to encourage wildlife too.



Traditional Bog Gardens and Water Gardens come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. True bog gardens usually possess a pond with shallow-sloping sides. This allows for layered planting with plants further down the slope preferring wetter conditions, and those higher up preferring drier but still fairly moist conditions. This will allow for changing levels in the water of the pond. If you have a steep-sided pond, you might like to consider adding some clay-rich soil to the sides to create this slope. However, if you are after a much more pristine, hard-edged pond, there are a plenty of deep-aquatic plants that will thrive. If you have very little space, why not try making a mini-pond in a deep container and planting some deep-aquatic species such as waterlilies.



# Creating a Bog or Water-based Garden

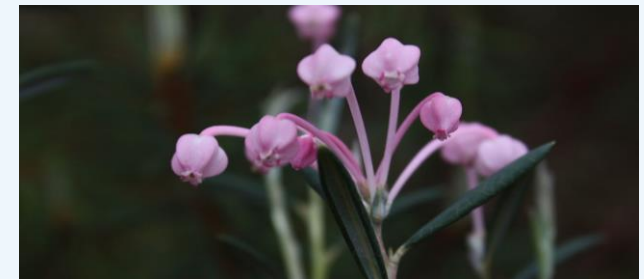
Some plants are not fussy and will tolerate a great range of moisture levels. Others will only do well in specific conditions. It is important to remember this when choosing your plants, so those that you choose can thrive. On the next page, you will find a key to each of the four moisture-level types that appear on the bog garden plant pages.



When choosing to create a water-based garden, the pH of the soil must also be taken into account. In the UK, some of our natural wetland habitats are peat bogs. These are naturally acidic so there are plants which will only thrive in acidic soil, such as bog-rosemary, but others which can tolerate it so it's always a good idea to carry out additional research after reading these pages before buying.

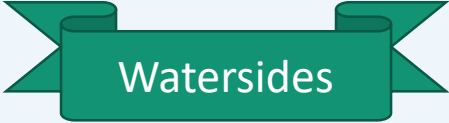
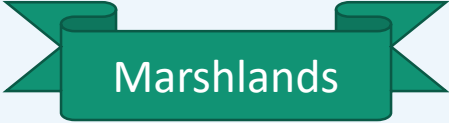
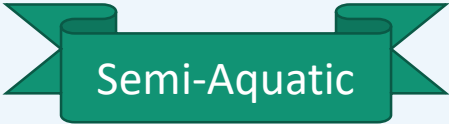
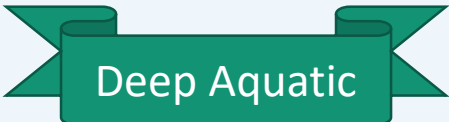


Naturally, different habitats have different inhabitants and bogs and wetlands have some of the more unique among British species. Animals such as frogs and newts may now frequent your garden if you dig a pond. Pollinating insects are no different. While there are some species of our standard insect categories that prefer watersides, other insect such as Dragonflies and Damselflies are also a lot more common. Our data does not yet stretch to these insects but it is known that some of these flowers are beneficial and it is always important to take note of which species are native as these are likely to provide more for our native insects and other animals.



# Bog Plant Areas - Definitions

Bog gardens can be made up of different areas with different levels of moisture. Each plant has been labelled with its preferable region which alludes to its preferable level of moisture. These areas are not necessarily clear-cut and various terms may be used causing confusion so these are the definitions of our terms:

-  **Watersides** = The least wet region. Waterside plants like constantly moist but not saturated soil. They naturally grow near marshes, lakes or rivers but rarely in them.
-  **Marshlands** = Marshlands have constantly saturated soil. Marshland plants enjoy growing in very damp soil but not being submerged in water. Many also grow by watersides.
-  **Semi-Aquatic** = Semi-aquatic plants may choose to grow in shallow water or close to the water's edge. Their roots anchor the plant in soil but are fully submerged in the water.
-  **Deep Aquatic** = Deep (Semi-)Aquatic plants often grow in the middle of large lakes and have no anchoring them to the soil. Their leaves, however, may rest above the water.

(Fully Aquatic Plants are those that are fully submerged by water; roots and leaves)



# Guide to using these pages:

## Map

Maps depict the native area of the plant (in green)  
They also show areas the plant is naturalised (in purple)

Latin Binomial  
Name

*Ranunculus flammula*  
Lesser Spearwort



Common  
English  
Name

Photograph  
of the plant  
in flower



Insect groups  
known to  
favour the  
nectar of this  
plant

Useful knowledge or warnings about the plant



All maps shown  
are derived from  
'Plants of the  
World Online';  
courtesy of Kew  
Gardens

Flowering Period  
(this is when it is good  
for pollinators!)

None

Summer ☀️

Ranunculaceae  
Buttercup Family

2ft Perennial

Marshlands

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Plant Family

Growing habit  
and mature size  
of the plant

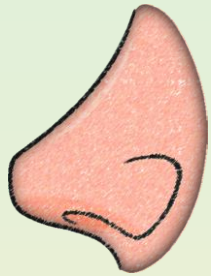
Preferred  
Moisture Level

RHS AGM cultivars of this species (or a related species occasionally)



# Key to these Pages

Additional information on these garden plants



The flowers and/or leaves have a Pleasant scent

This plant would only be suitable for meadow-style planting



Plant is often used in traditional Herbal Remedies



The plant has edible parts that are commonly eaten or used in cooking



## Warnings



Plant tissue is highly toxic if ingested



Sap may cause irritation (Wash hands after touching or avoid touching)



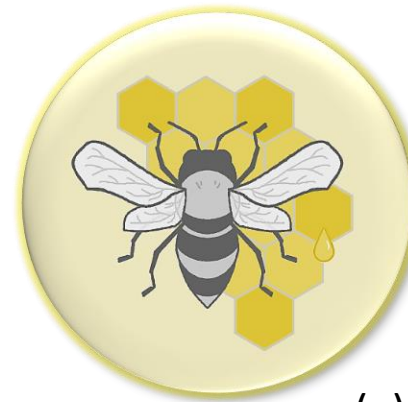
# Pollinators

Our data on pollinators has been collected from studies spanning over a decade. Pollinator symbols appear when plants are proven to be good nectar plants for certain insects.

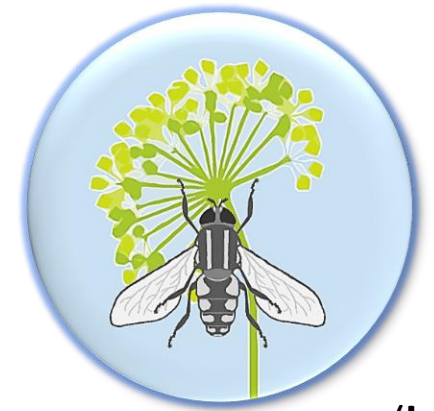
It should be noted that all bee and hoverfly data is ours but lepidoptera data is taken from Butterfly Conservation.

Our data spans a wide range of different insect species. For simplicity, these species have been condensed into six easy icons to represent them:

- |               |                                    |                  |
|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| a) Honeybees  | c) Bumblebees                      | e) Moths         |
| b) Hoverflies | d) Butterflies<br>(Includes Moths) | f) Solitary Bees |



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)

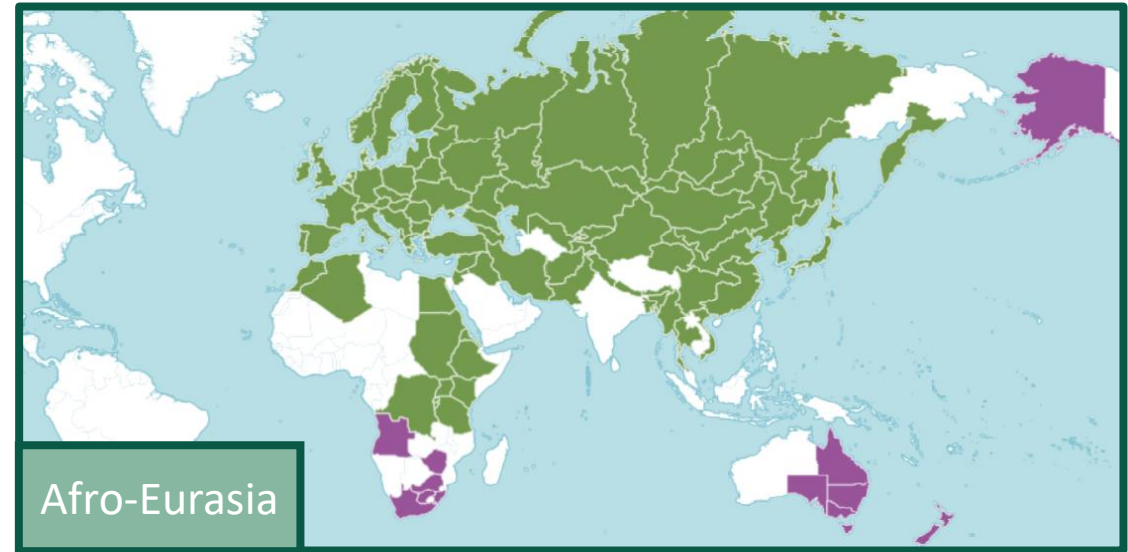


(f)



# *Alisma plantago-aquatica*

## Water-plantain



Photograph from Flickr by Peter O'Connor

None

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a trophy cup and a tree.

Spring

Alismataceae  
Water-plantain Family

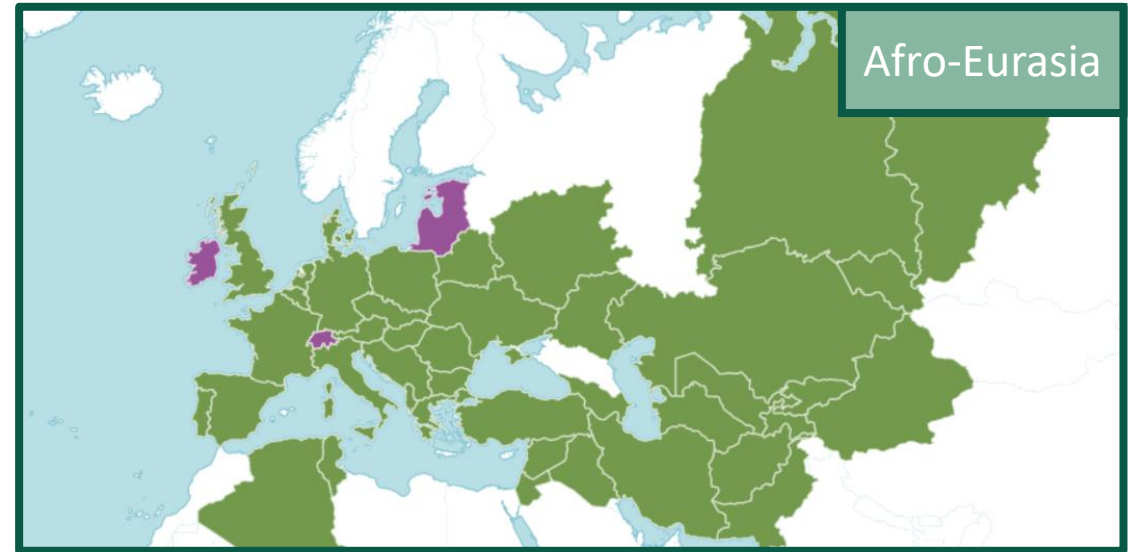
4ft Perennial

Semi-Aquatic



# *Althaea officinalis*

## Marsh Mallow



Afro-Eurasia



Photograph from Flickr by Gertjan van Noord

None

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right is a stylized white tree icon.

Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Malvaceae  
Mallow Family

6ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Andromeda polifolia*

## Bog-rosemary



Mid Spring  
- Early Summer

Ericaceae  
Heather Family

Small Shrub

Acidic Marsh



# *Astilbe chinensis*

## False Goat's-beard



'Purpurlanze'  
'Superba'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀️

Saxifragaceae  
Saxifrage Family

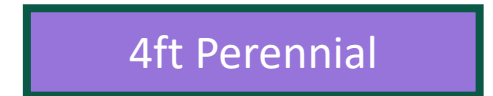
3ft Perennial

Watersides



# *Bidens aurea*

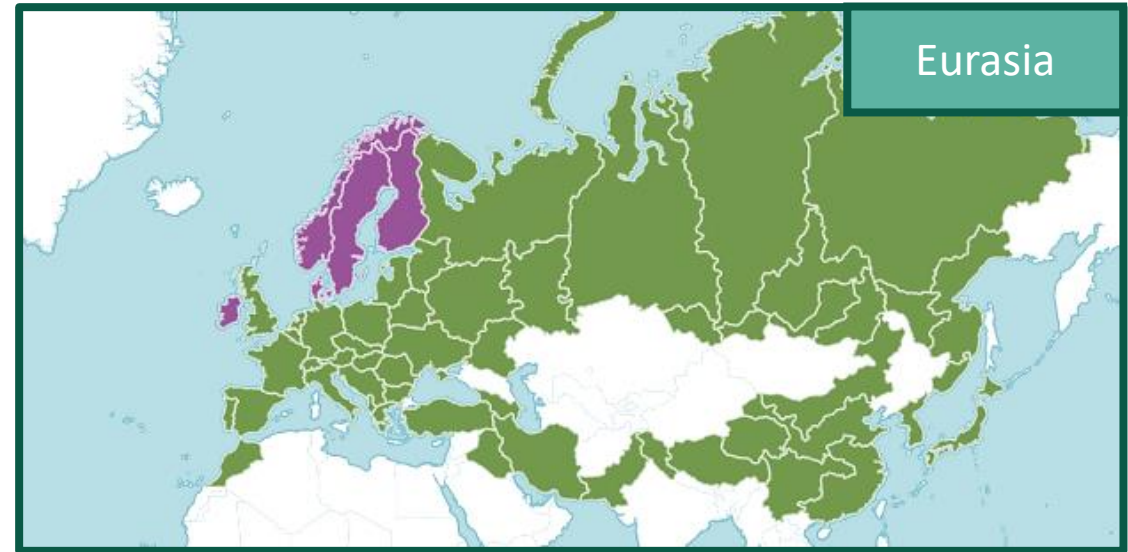
## Arizona Beggarticks





# *Bistorta officinalis*

## Common Bistort



'Superba'

Midsummer  
- Mid Autumn

Polygonaceae  
Knotweed Family

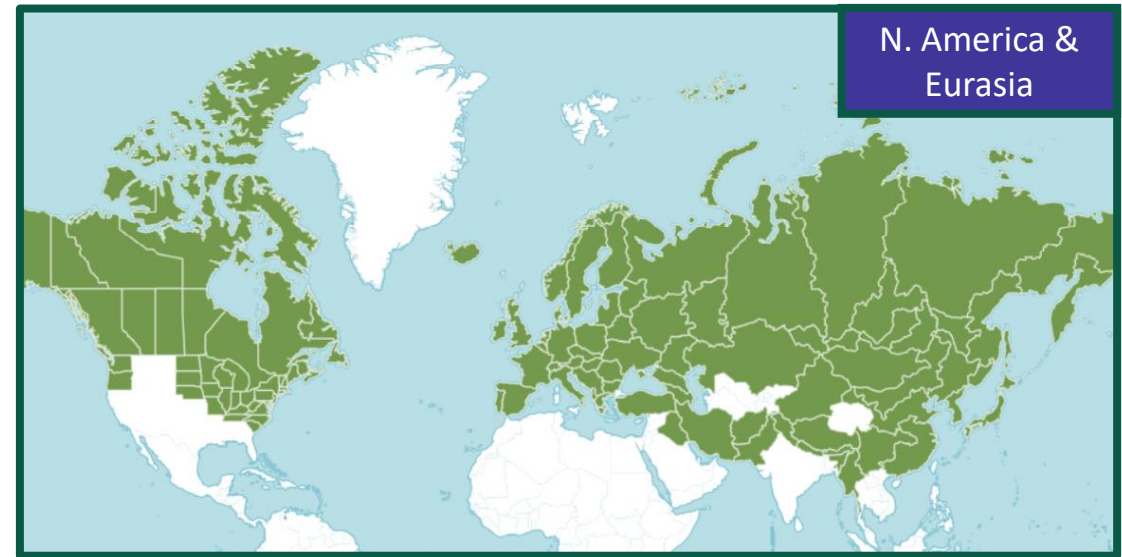
3ft Perennial

Marshlands




# *Caltha palustris*

## Marsh-marigold



Photograph © Thomas McBride

Species

Spring 

Ranunculaceae  
Buttercup Family

1ft Perennial

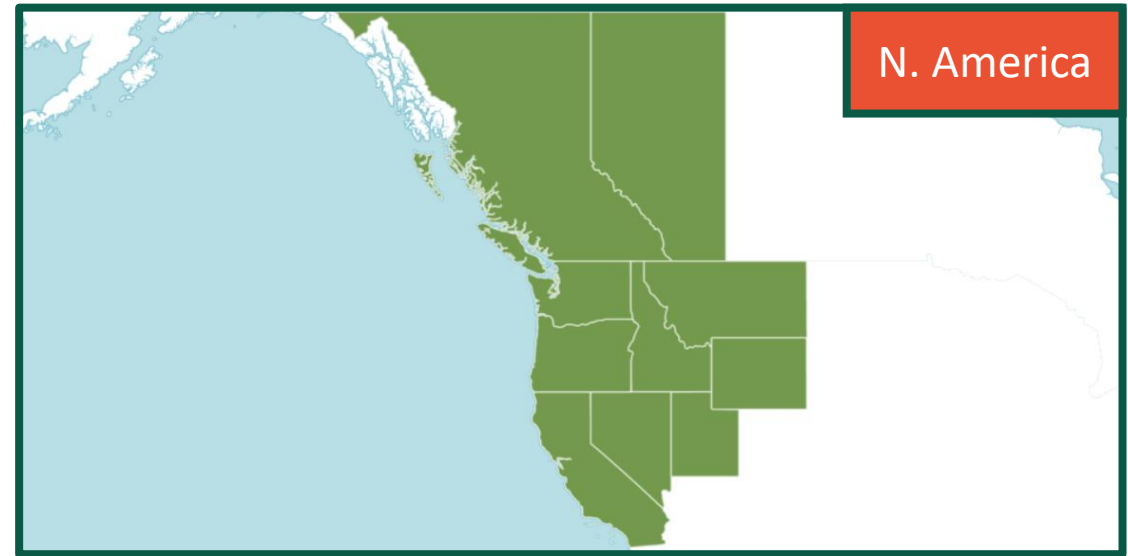


Semi-Aquatic



# *Camassia quamash*

## Common Camassia



N. America

None



Late Spring  
- Early Summer

Asparagaceae  
Asparagus Family

3ft Bulbous

Watersides

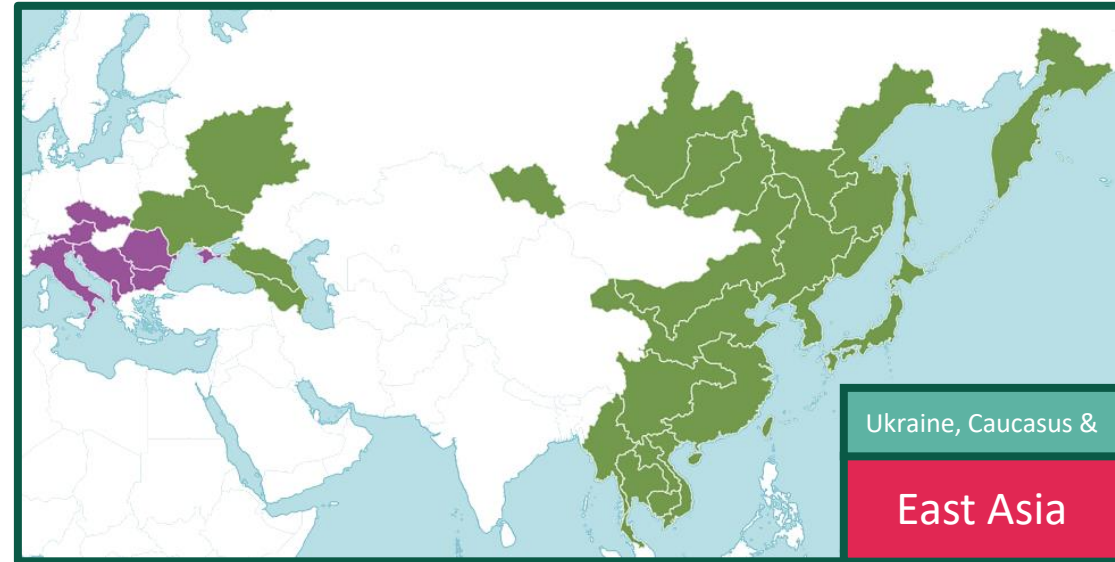


# *Commelina communis*

## Asiatic Dayflower



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Reinhold Möller



None

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Commelinaceae  
Dayflower Family

2ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Cornus alba*

## Red-barked Dogwood



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Babij



'Aurea'  
'Sibirica'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Late Spring  
- Early Summer

Cornaceae  
Dogwood Family

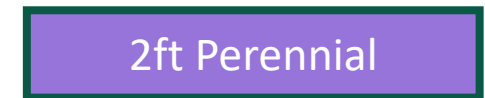
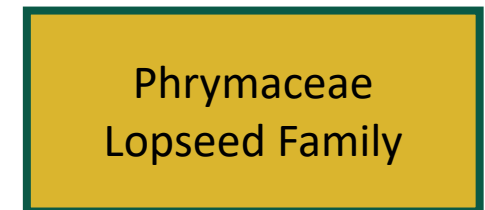
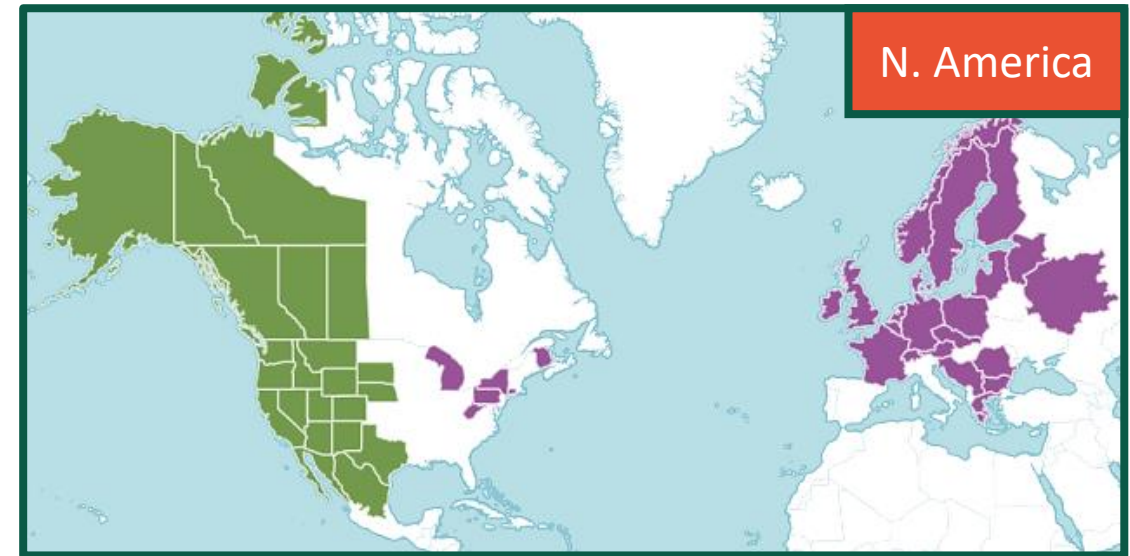
Medium Shrub

Marshlands



# *Erythranthe guttata*

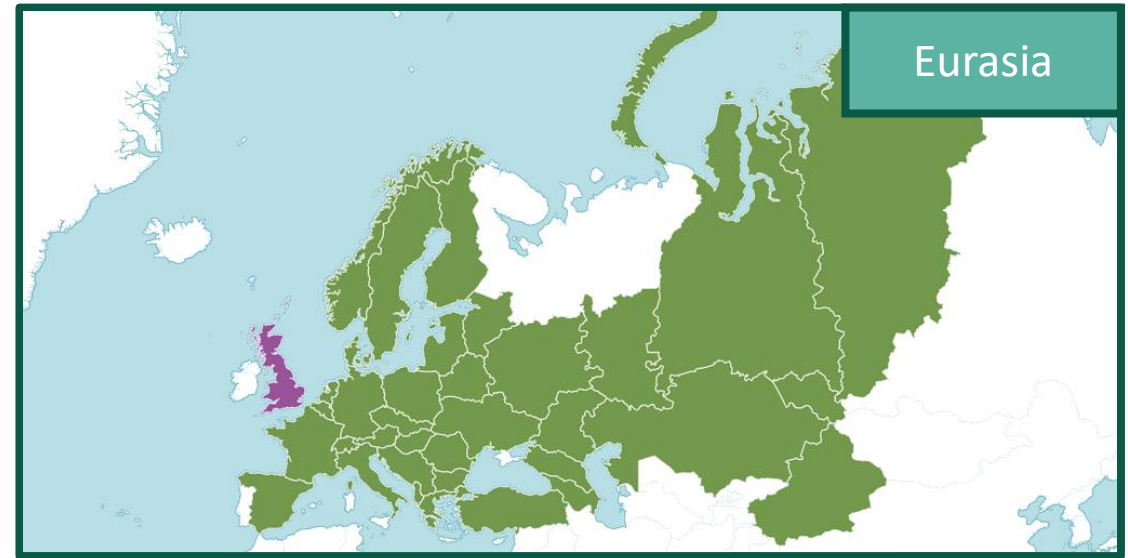
## Yellow Monkeyflower





# *Euphorbia palustris*

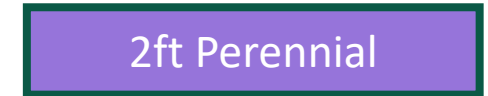
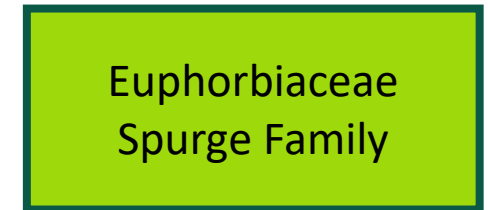
## Marsh Spurge



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Henna K.



- Species -





# *Filipendula ulmaria* Meadowsweet



Photograph by Thomas McBride

Related species: *Filipendula rubra*

## 'Venusta'



Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Rosaceae  
Rose Family

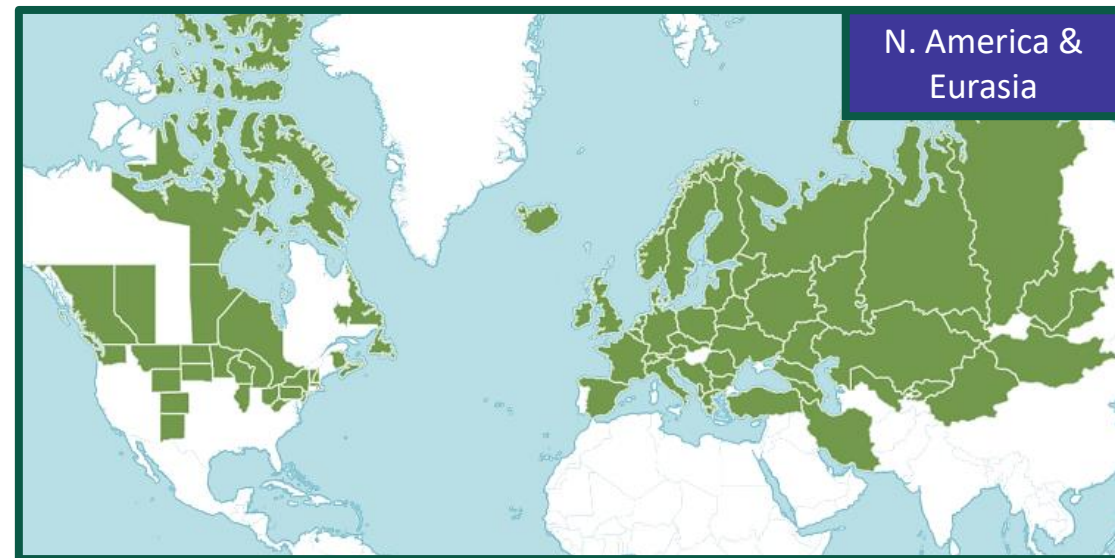
3ft Perennial

Watersides



# *Geum rivale*

## Water Avens



Photograph from Flickr (D) Luc Coekaerts

Related species: *Geum* hybrid cultivars

'Fire Opal'  
'Mrs J Bradshaw'

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right of the logo is a stylized tree icon.

Late Spring  
- Midsummer

Rosaceae  
Rose Family

2ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Hemerocallis fulva*

## Orange Daylily



'Cayenne'  
'Selma Longlegs'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Asphodelaceae  
Asphodel Family

3ft Perennial

Watersides



# *Hosta sieboldiana* Syn. *H. fortunei*

## Giant Blue Plantain-lily



*Var. aureomarginata*  
'Frances Williams'



Summer ☀

Asparagaceae  
Asparagus Family

2ft Perennial

Watersides



# *Impatiens noli-tangere*

## Yellow Balsam



Photograph © Thomas McBride

None

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right is a stylized white tree icon.

Summer ☀️

Balsaminaceae  
Balsam Family

4ft Annual

Marshlands



# *Iris pseudacorus*

## Yellow Flag



Afro-Eurasia



Photograph © Thomas McBride

'Roy Davidson'  
'Variegata'

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a tree icon to the right.

Late Spring  
- Midsummer

Iridaceae  
Iris Family

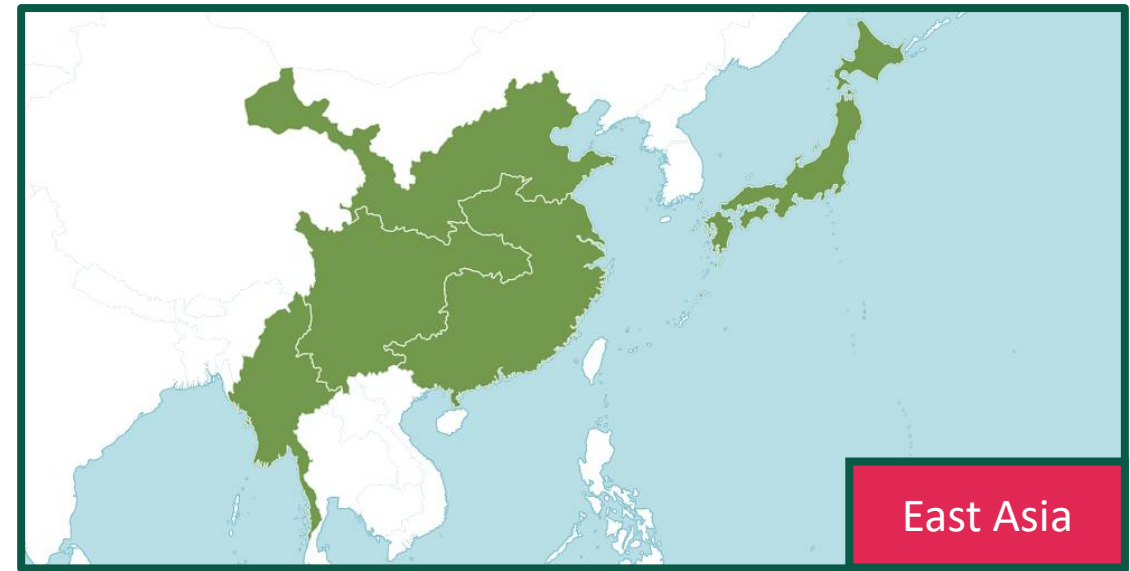
4ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Ligularia dentata*

## Leopardplant



'Britt Marie Crawford'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Asteraceae  
Daisy Family

4ft Perennial

Watersides



# *Ligularia stenocephala*

## Narrow-headed Leopardplant



East Asia

'The Rocket'  
'Zepter'



Summer ☀

Asteraceae  
Daisy Family

4ft Perennial

Watersides

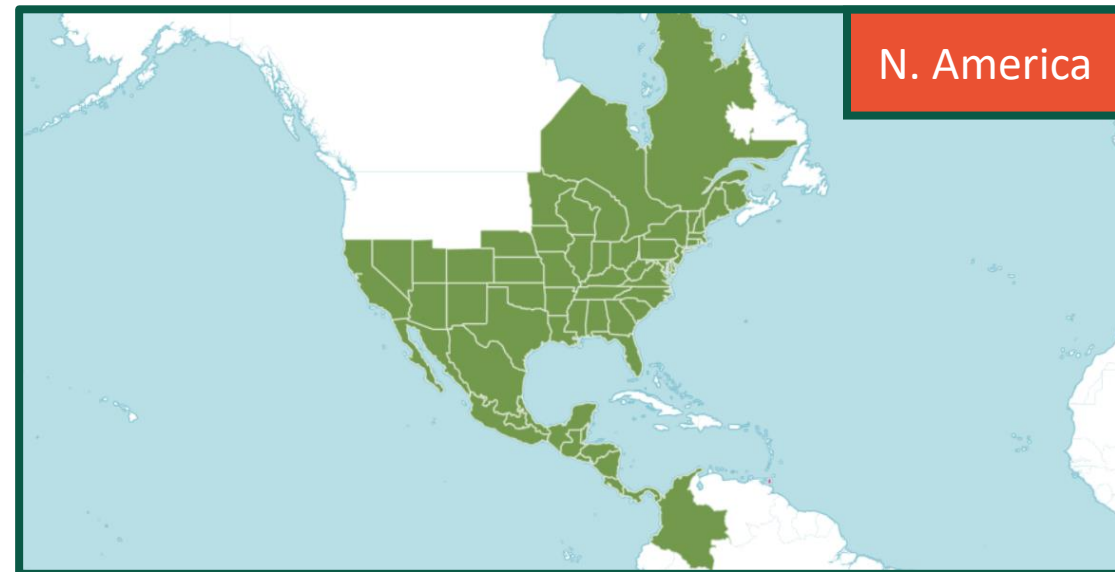


# *Lobelia cardinalis*

## Red Cardinal Flower



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Kerry Woods



- Species -  
'Queen Victoria'



Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Campanulaceae  
Bellflower Family

3ft Annual\*

Marshlands

\*Or short-lived  
21 half-hardy  
perennial



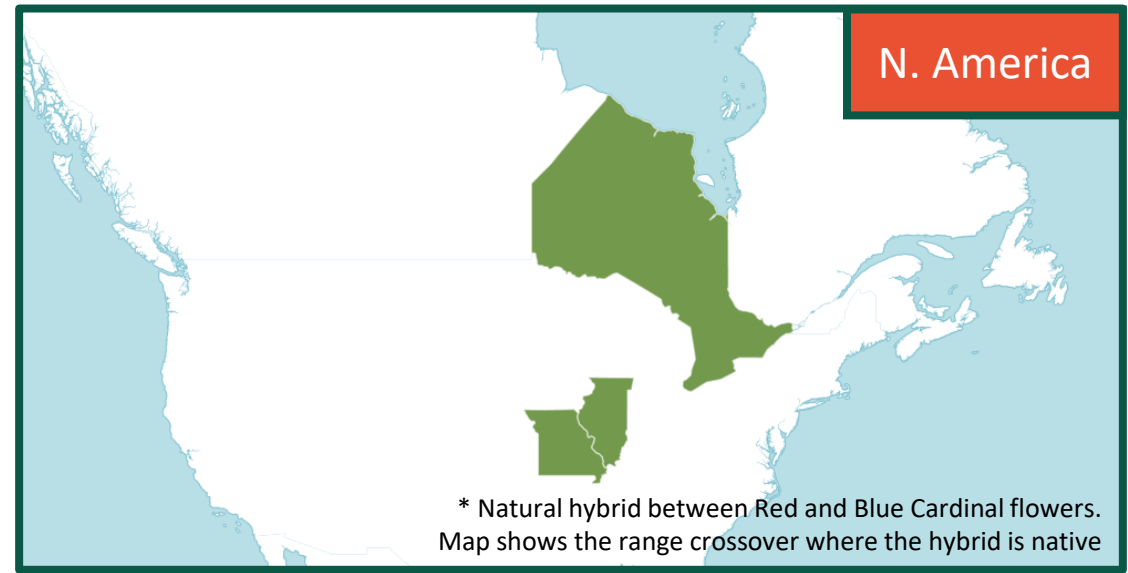
# *Lobelia x speciosa*

## Purple Cardinal Flower

*Lobelia siphilitica* x *Lobelia cardinalis*\*



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Alwyn Ladell



'Pink Elephant'  
'Fan series'



Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Campanulaceae  
Bellflower Family

3ft Annual

Watersides



# *Lychnis flos-cuculi*

## Ragged Robin



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Steve Guttman



None

Mid Spring  
- Early Summer

Caryophyllaceae  
Pink Family

2ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Lysimachia vulgaris*

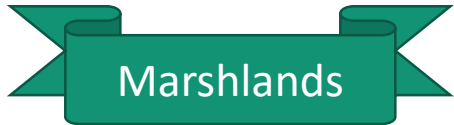
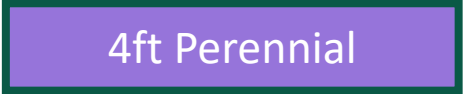
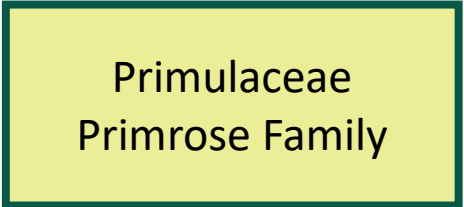
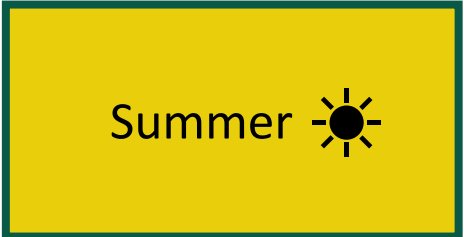
## Yellow Loosestrife



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Udo Schmidt



None





# *Lythrum salicaria*

## Purple Loosestrife



Afro-Eurasia



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Xuliese G



'Blush'  
'Feuerkerze'

Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Lythraceae  
Pomegranate Family

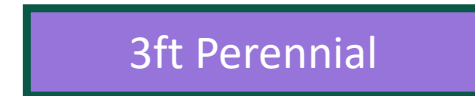
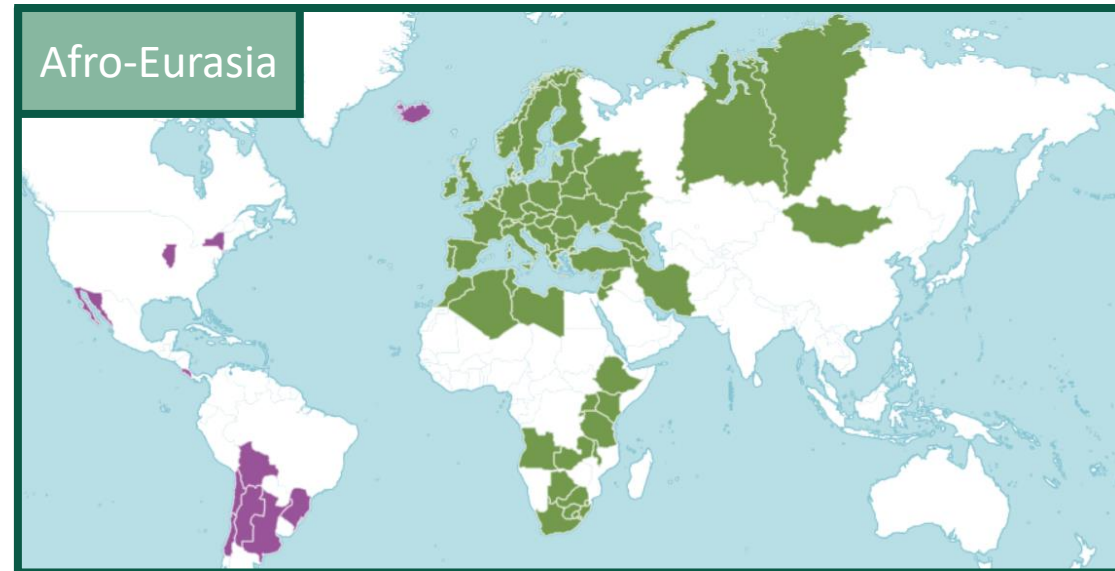
4ft Perennial

Marshlands



# *Mentha aquatica*

## Water Mint





# *Menyanthes trifoliata*

## Common Bogbean



None

Summer ☀

Menyanthaceae  
Bogbean Family

2ft Perennial



Semi-Aquatic



# *Myosotis scorpioides*

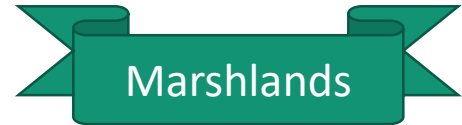
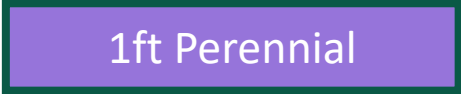
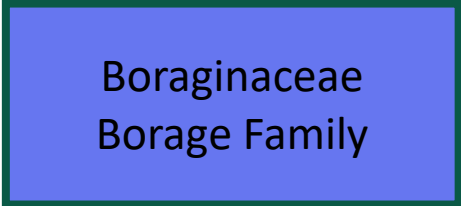
## Water Forget-me-not



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Dr. Bali



None





# *Narthecium ossifragum*

## Bog Asphodel



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Frank Vassen

None

Midsummer  
- Early Autumn

Nartheciaceae  
Bog Asphodel Family

3ft Perennial



Acidic Marsh



# *Nuphar lutea*

## Yellow Waterlily



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Derek Winterburn

None

Summer ☀

Nymphaeaceae  
Waterlily Family

1ft/8ft Perennial



Deep Aquatic



# *Nymphaea alba*

## White Waterlily



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Linda de Volder

'Gladstoniana'



Summer ☀

Nymphaeaceae  
Waterlily Family

1ft/8ft Perennial

Deep Aquatic



# *Nymphaea alba f. rosea*

Red Waterlily

(Syn. *N. alba* var. *rubra*)



‘Escarboucle’  
‘James Brydon’

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Nymphaeaceae  
Waterlily Family

1ft/8ft Perennial

Deep Aquatic

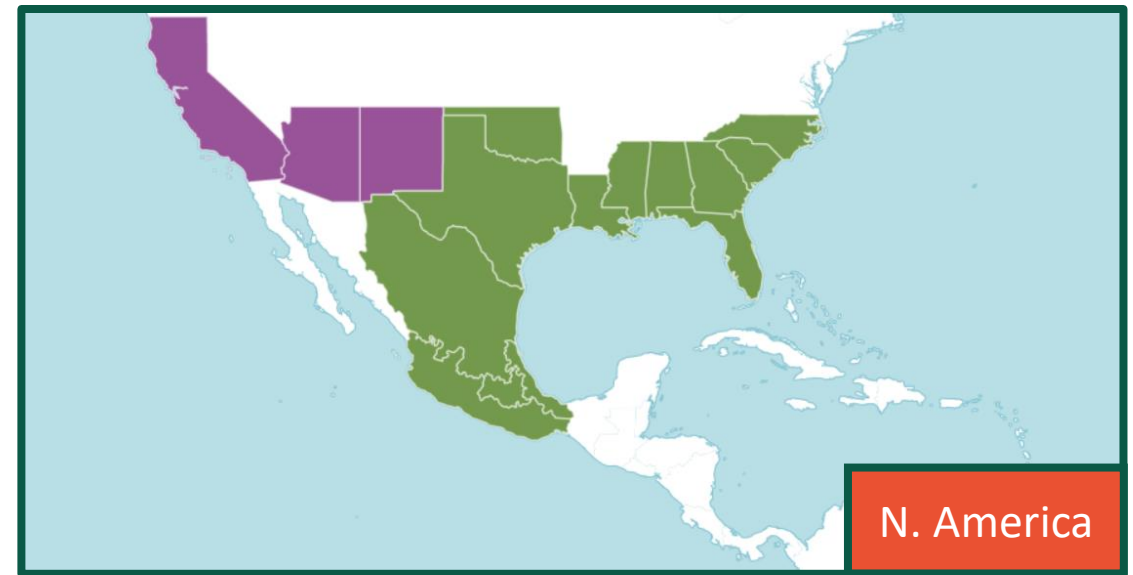


# *Nymphaea mexicana*

## Banana Waterlily



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Ralph Daily



Related Hybrids:

'Chromatella'

'Pygmaea Helvola'



Summer ☀

Nymphaeaceae  
Waterlily Family

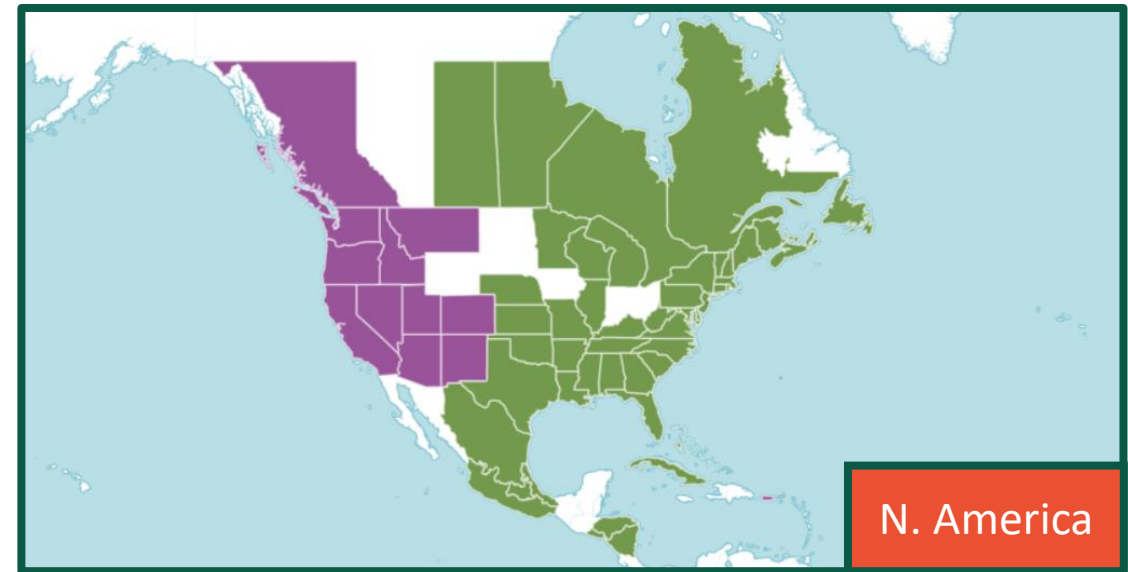
1ft/8ft Perennial

Deep Aquatic



# *Nymphaea odorata*

## Fragrant Waterlily



'Gonnère'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Nymphaeaceae  
Waterlily Family

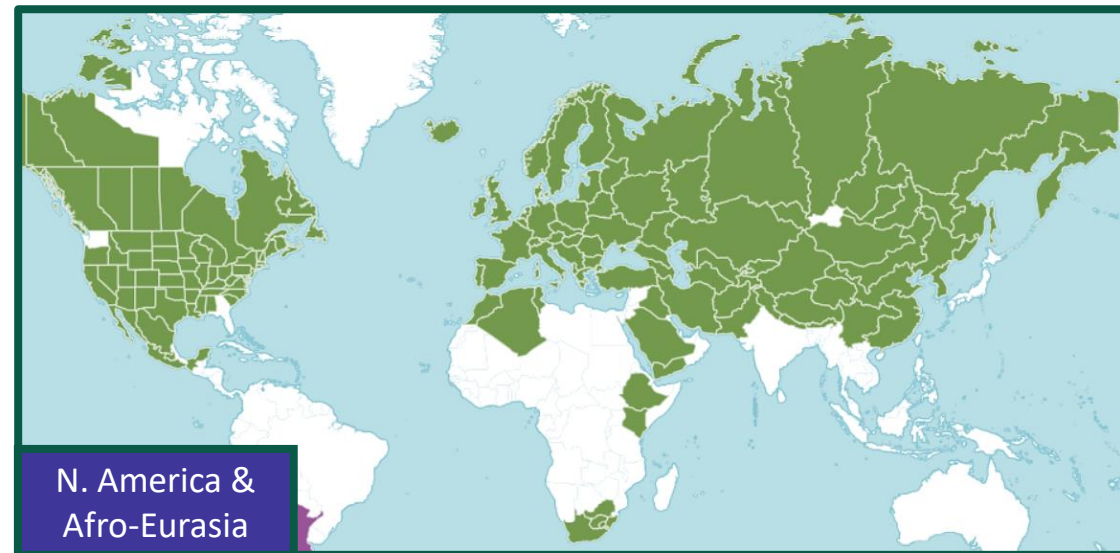
1ft/8ft Perennial

Deep Aquatic



# *Persicaria amphibia*

## Water Knotweed



None



Midsummer  
- Mid Autumn

Polygonaceae  
Knotweed Family

1ft/5ft Perennial

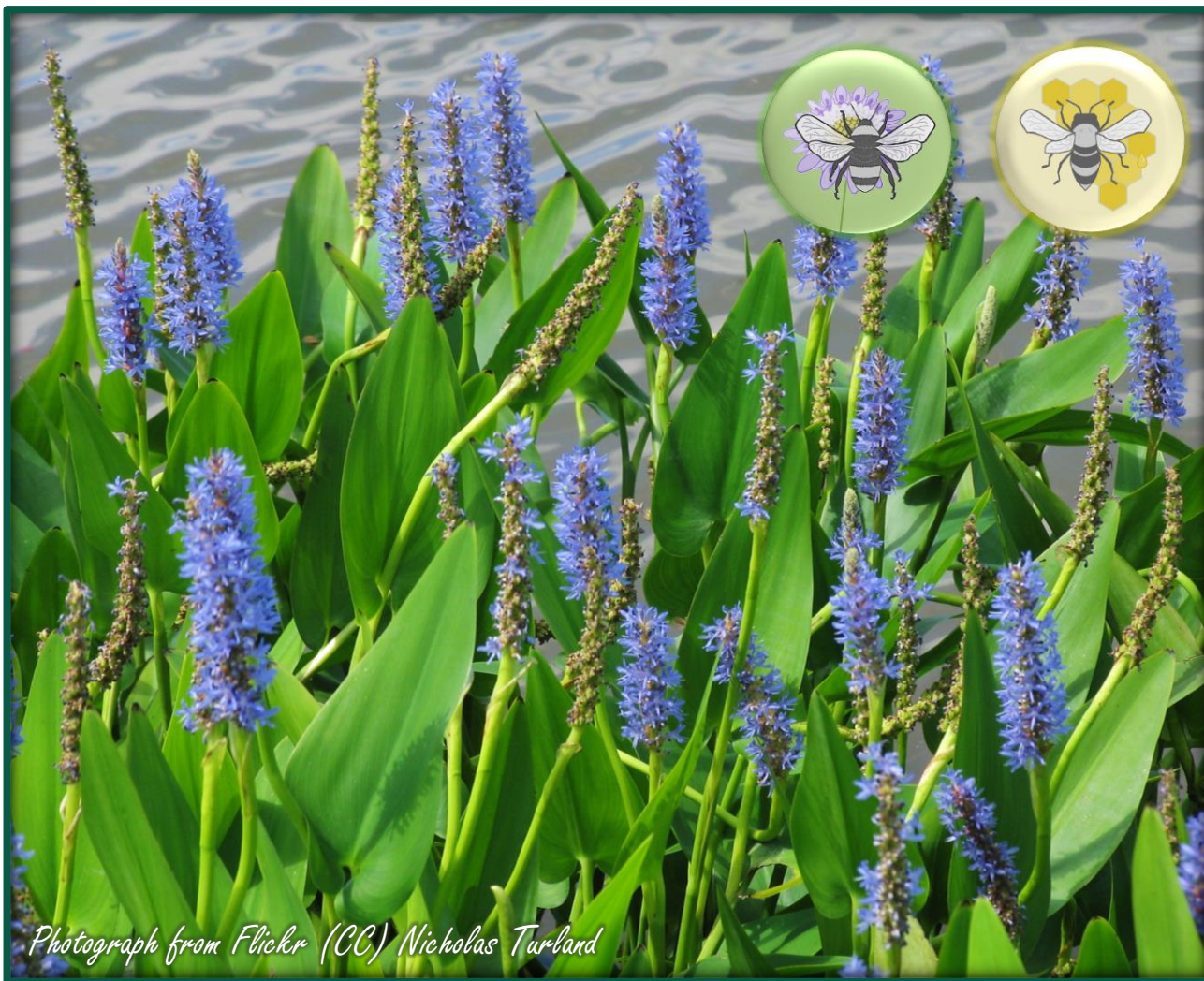
Deep Aquatic\*

\*Both marginal/  
marshland and  
35 deep-aquatic  
subspecies exist

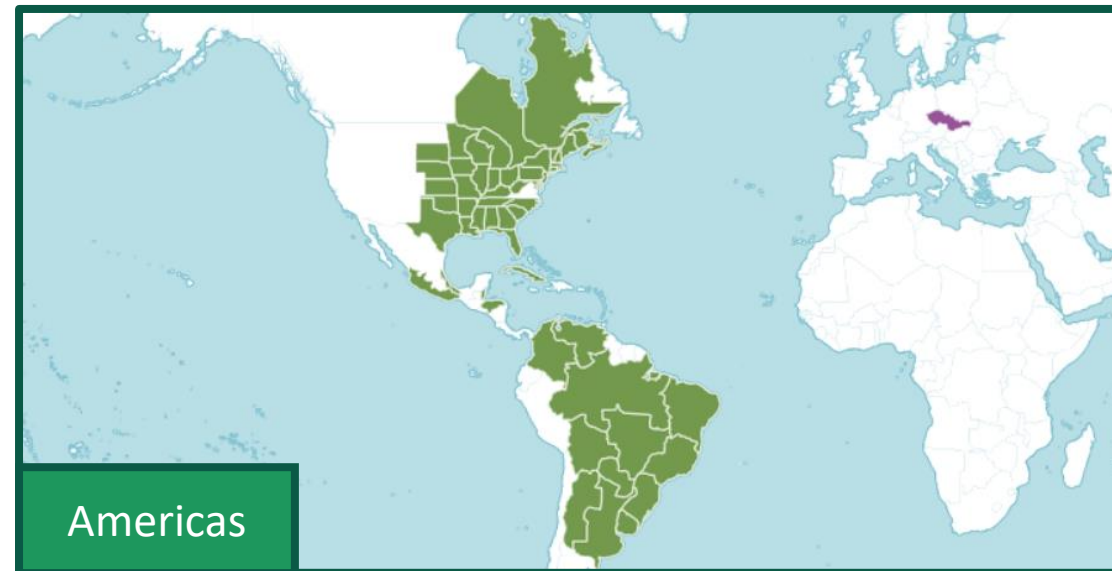


# *Pontederia cordata*

## Pickerel Weed



*Photograph from Flickr (CC) Nicholas Turland*



- Species -



Summer ☀

Pontederiaceae  
Pickerel Weed Family

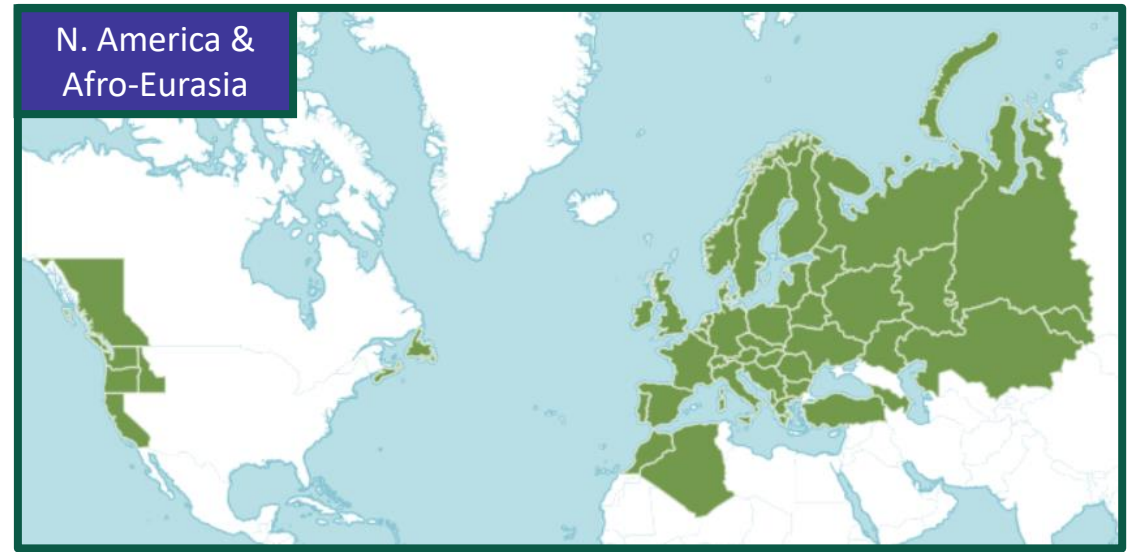
4ft Aquatic Perennial

Semi-aquatic



# *Ranunculus flammula*

## Lesser Spearwort



None

Summer ☀

Ranunculaceae  
Buttercup Family

2ft Perennial



Marshlands



# *Stachys palustris*

## Marsh Woundwort



None



Summer ☀

Lamiaceae  
Mint Family

3ft Perennial

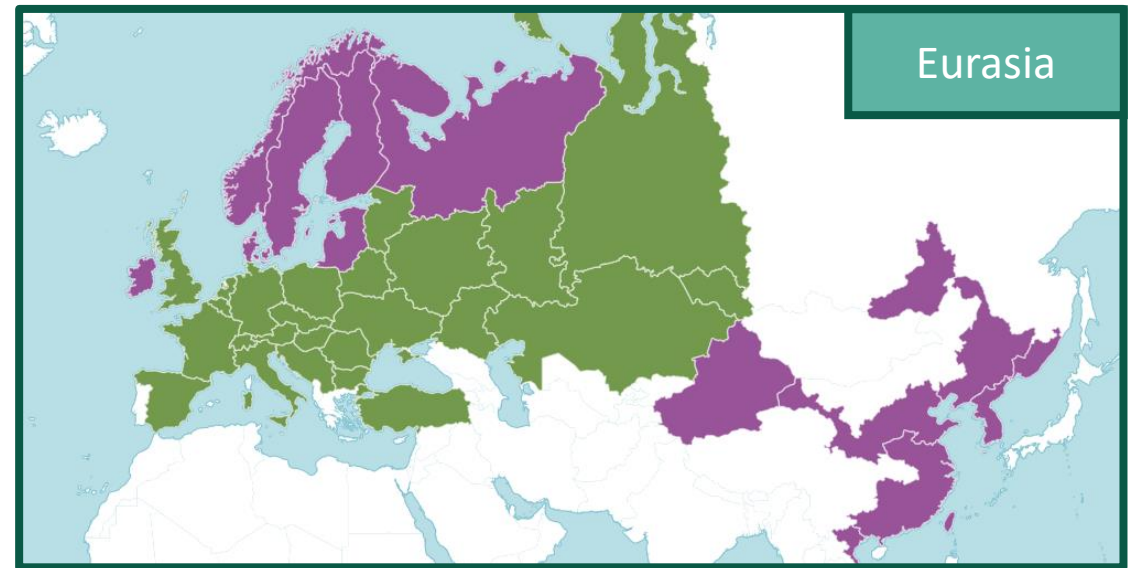
Marshlands

Photograph from Flickr (CC) ekenitr



# *Symphytum officinale*

## Common Comfrey



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Gail Hampshire

None



Late Spring  
- Midsummer

Boraginaceae  
Borage Family

5ft Perennial

Marshlands

This plant will spread so allow plenty of room.



# *Valeriana officinalis*

## Garden Valerian



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Gail Hampshire



None



Summer ☀

Caprifoliaceae  
Honeysuckle Family

4ft Perennial

Watersides