

Common Aquatic Plants

Aquatic plants (also referred to as aquatic vegetation) are plants in the lake; either rooted in the soil or floating in the water.

Emergent plants are rooted and stand above the surface, often growing along the shoreline.



Cat tails



Bulrushes

Common submerged plants are rooted and most are under the water, although small portions may stick above the water.



Yellow pond lily
and arrowhead



Flat stemmed
pondweed

Photo: Donald Cameron

Invasive plants have also been introduced in Alberta. If you see an invasive plant, report it to EDDMaps Alberta or 1-855-336-BOAT – do not remove it on your own.



Flowering Rush



Himalayan Balsam

To learn more about aquatic plants, visit alms.ca and search “Aquatic plants”.

Respect Our Lakes

Aquatic Plant Removal



For more information:

Search ‘Respect our Lakes’ on Alberta.ca
Contact us at rol@gov.ab.ca
Call 310-3773

To report emergencies or complaints, call the
Environmental Hotline at 1-800-222-6514

Alberta

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Aquatic Plants in Alberta Lakes

Aquatic plants are important for maintaining healthy lake ecosystems. They provide habitat for fish spawning, nesting habitat for birds, rearing sites for young fish and wildlife, and they protect shorelines from wave and wind erosion. Aquatic plants also perform many important functions that maintain lake water quality, such as filtering runoff water that enters the lake. Lakes that have lost significant aquatic plants are especially vulnerable to excess plant growth, such as blue-green algal (cyanobacteria) blooms, due to excess nutrient availability.

Lakeshore residents may wish to cut or remove aquatic plants to make it easier to put in docks and piers, or to improve swimming and boating conditions.

Aquatic plants play an important role in filtering runoff and reducing additional nutrients that enter the lake.



It also provides important fish habitat - remove as little as possible after you've received proper authorizations to help keep these important functions intact.



Unauthorized Aquatic Vegetation Cutting and Removal Is Illegal

Removing or cutting aquatic vegetation requires prior authorization by Environment and Parks. Unauthorized removal or cutting could be subject to fines and penalties. Here's what the law says:

- Under the *Water Act*, authorization is required for an activity which affects a water body such as aquatic vegetation removal
- Under the *Public Lands Act*, it is prohibited to disturb the bed and shore of a water body without prior authorization

Restrictions around timing, method of removal and width of area removed apply to ensure impact to the aquatic environment including fisheries and wildlife habitat are minimized. Requirements will be specified in the authorization if it is granted.

How to apply for an authorization

You can apply for a general *Water Act* authorization through Environmental Approvals System (EAS) OneStop.

A Temporary Field Authorization under the *Public Lands Act* can be applied for through regional offices. Search for 'Temporary Field Authorization'

on www.alberta.ca for required forms and contact information. An authorization under the *Public Lands Act* may be exempt if there is no disturbance or modification to the lake bed or its banks. Applications need to clearly describe the activity taking place and its location with respect to the individual lot, materials and tools that will be used, and actions to mitigate impacts to the bed and shore and the aquatic environment.

Stewardship actions

- Leave the shoreline in its natural condition — shoreline vegetation provides habitat for fish and wildlife, maintains water quality by filtering runoff and protects the shoreline against erosion.
- Aquatic plants are not "weeds" — let them grow! Submerged aquatic plants compete with algae for nutrients and light, trap sediment and provide important wildlife habitat.
- Consider sharing docks, piers and boat lanes within your community to minimize shoreline disturbance.
- Keep your beach natural, don't plow it or add sand.