

Guidelines for Preventing the Introduction and Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species: Water Gardening

When constructing a new water garden

Choose a location away from natural waterways and flood-prone areas. *This will help ensure that the plants and animals in the water garden will not be carried into local streams, ponds or lakes as a result of heavy rainfall.*

When adding plants

Purchase from licensed nurseries. *Many jurisdictions require that the license be posted. If the license isn't clearly visible, ask an employee about their licensing.*

Choose regionally-native or non-invasive plants. *This will reduce the amount of plant-removal (i.e., weeding) needed to maintain the garden while also reducing the risk to nearby waterways should any plants be moved by wind, animals, flooding, etc.*

Check with your state natural resources agency to confirm which plants to avoid for your region. *Many states maintain regulated invasive species lists.*

Rinse plants in a bucket before planting. Remove all dirt and any attached debris including other vegetation, animals, or eggs before planting; dump bucket water on dry land. Strain debris from water before dumping and dispose of debris in a plastic bag. *This will help keep unwanted plants and animals from being accidentally introduced into the water garden, and keep these same organisms out of storm drains that might lead to natural waterways.*

When doing maintenance

Check that the water garden remains isolated from natural waterways and areas that flood. *If this is not the case, the above recommendations regarding plant choice and rinsing are even more critical; installation of standard landscape water diverting structures (e.g., water bars, swales) or relocation of the water garden should be considered.*

Remove uninvited plants that colonize your pond. *A plant that moves into your pond and becomes established is likely an invasive species. It should be removed and disposed of properly (see below).*

Freeze unwanted plants in a sealed plastic bag and dispose in the trash. *Unwanted plants should not be composted because their seeds and other reproductive plant parts may remain viable.*

Find a new home for unwanted fish such as a pet retailer, animal shelter, or other water gardener. *If your animal finds a home with another water gardener, make sure that it won't be released into the environment in the future. If euthanasia is an option, consult with a veterinarian.*