

Non-Native (exotic) aquatic plants are not from Florida and outgrow native aquatic plants, degrade water quality, decrease water flow, & disturb native wildlife. To control foreign vegetation, it is often treated biologically by grass carp introduction, chemically with herbicides, & mechanically with harvesters.

**Non-Native Exotics include:**



**Hvdrilla** (*Hydrilla verticillata*)



**Parrot Feather** (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)

The exotic vegetation that exists in Cape Coral’s canals is commonly a result of personal aquarium dumping. PLEASE, never dump plant material from aquariums into our canals!

Healthy aquatic ecosystems with native vegetation provide many benefits for both people and wildlife. Several benefits are: improved water quality, recreational opportunities, and aesthetics.

The City of Cape Coral’s Environmental Resources Division (ERD) & the Lee County Hyacinth Control District (LCHCD) maintain that aquatic plants are an essential part of the canals health. Native vegetation will not be treated unless it reaches levels that interfere with navigation, and then only minimally to resolve the problem.

For questions & information about aquatic vegetation, including aquascaping your waterfront; please call:

**ERD** at: 574-0745 or 574-0746  
**Citizen Action Center** at: 574-0425  
**LCHCD** at: 694-2174

Or Visit:  
<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>

# Cape Coral’s Aquatic Vegetation



Tape grass  
*Vallisneria americana*  
 Photo by Vic Ramey  
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Cape Coral has 300 miles of freshwater canals. Just as plants grow in your yard, the canal bottom provides a bed for aquatic plants. Sunlight can penetrate the depths of shallow canals, allowing aquatic plants to grow.

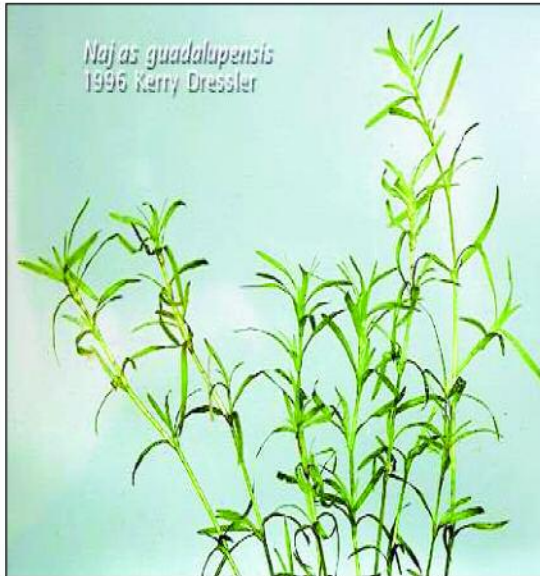
Aquatic plants in the canals are essential for a number of reasons:

1. Aquatic Plants absorb nutrients (fertilizers) from yard & stormwater runoff.
2. Aquatic Plants help to prevent algal blooms, thus increasing water clarity.
3. Aquatic plants & organisms help prevent midge outbreaks.
4. Aquatic plants provide habitat, food, & protection for wildlife.

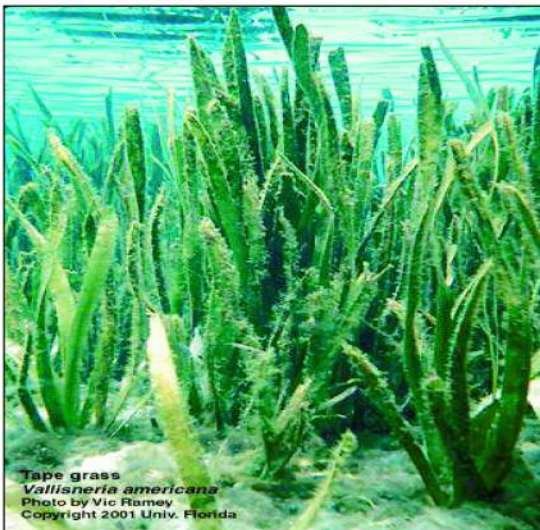
Thus, native aquatic plants commonly referred to as submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) are beneficial for aquatic ecosystems.

There are many different types of submerged & emergent aquatic vegetation in Cape Coral canals. While many aquatic plants are native to Florida's waters, some are exotic invasive plants that can become a nuisance.

## Native Submerged Plants:



**Southern Naiad** (*Najas guadalupensis*)



**Tape Grass** (*Vallisneria Americana*)

*Pictures courtesy of the University of Florida IFAS*



**Muskgrass** (*Chara spp.*)

## Native Emergent Plants:

Include the following flowering aquatic vegetation (clockwise from upper left):

**Blue Flag Iris** (*Iris virginica*)

**Lizard's Tail** (*Saururus cernuus*)

**Golden Canna Lily** (*Canna flaccida*)

**Duck Potato** (*Sagittaria lancifolia*)

