

# Carolina Water-shield

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Cabomba caroliniana*

**AKA:** Fanwort, Tarian-y-dŵr Carolina (Welsh)

**Native to:** South America and eastern North America

**Habitat:** Lakes, ponds and fast and slow flowing rivers

Normally occurs as a fully submerged perennial aquatic plant that can grow to 2 metres long, rooting in the bed of the water body. It has finely divided fan-shaped dark green leaves attached to the stem in pairs. Can have a tubular appearance in water due to the way the leaves are arranged under the water. Occasionally it produces small, diamond-shaped, entire, floating leaves borne on the flowering stem. The solitary flowers (less than 2 cm across) range in colour from white to pale yellow occasionally with a pink or purplish tinge. The flowers emerge on stalks at the ends of the stems.

It was first recorded in the Forth and Clyde Canal in 1969 and the Basingstoke Canal in 1990. It is a popular aquarium plant and plants in the wild are probably due to intentional introductions from aquaria. Although it is not widespread in the UK, it has become an invasive weed in many other countries and has become naturalized in North America, India, Japan and Australasia. It could potentially spread in the UK.

Fanwort can form dense stands that can displace native species as well as clog up waterways. It easily spreads via stem fragments which makes management difficult.

Carolina water-shield is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features



# Identification throughout the year

Dies back in winter, but can be found submerged throughout the year. Re-growth starts in spring.

# Distribution

Only reported at very few locations

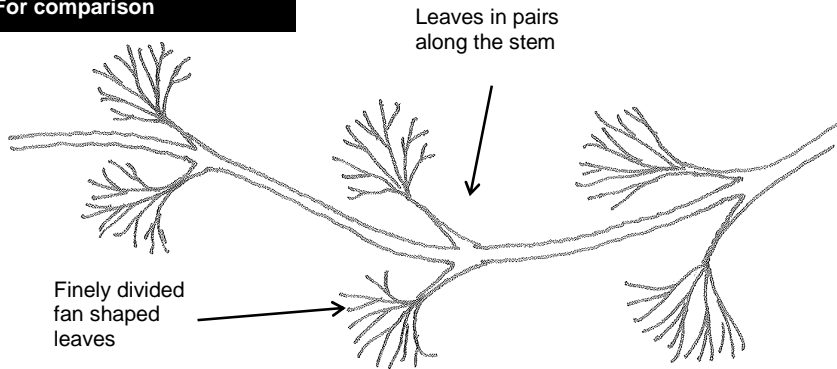
Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



# Similar Species

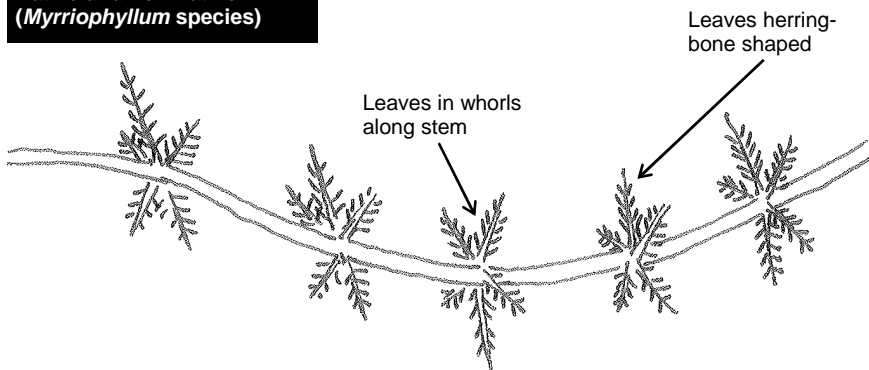
## Water-shield species

Non-native  
(*Cabomba* species)  
For comparison



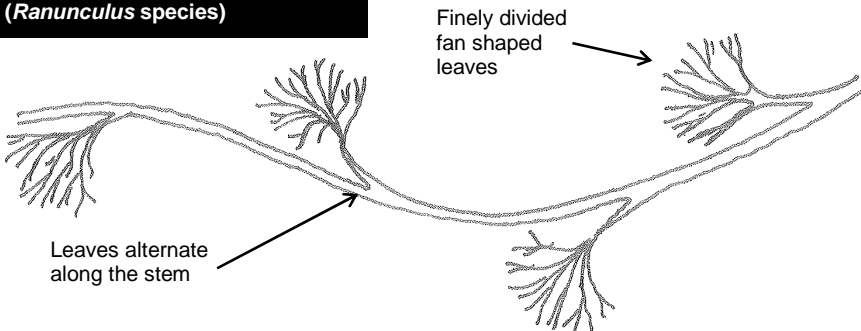
## Water-milfoil species

Native and non-native  
(*Myriophyllum* species)



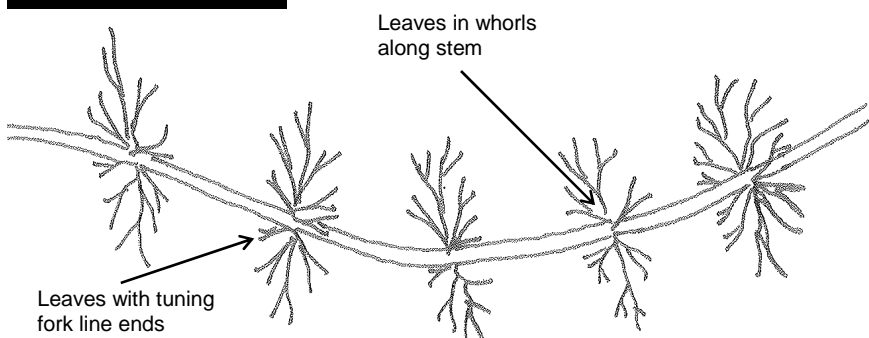
## Water Crow-foot species

Native  
(*Ranunculus* species)



## Hornwort species

Native  
(*Ceratophyllum* species)



## References and further reading:

- Preston, C D and Croft, J M (1997) "*Aquatic plants in Britain and Ireland*". Harley Books
- Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "*New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*". Oxford University Press
- Stace, C (1999) "*Field Flora of the British Isles*". Cambridge University Press