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Pontederia cordata

[Synonyms : *Narukila cordata*, *Pontederia cordata* var. *angustifolia*, *Pontederia cordata* var. *lanceolata*, *Pontederia cordata* var. *lancifolia*, *Pontederia lanceolata*, *Unisema cordata*]

PICKEREL WEED is a deciduous, freshwater aquatic perennial. Native to eastern North America it has tiny odorous, yellow-eyed, soft blue flowers that have a darker blue lip. It is also known as Alligator-wampee, Black potato, Blue bull-tongue, Cooter-wampee, Cow-wampee, Dog tongue, Dog tongue-wampee, *Modráška srdčitá* (Czech), Moose ear, Pickerel plant, Tuckahoe, Wakerobin, Wampee, *Wampi* (North American Indian), Water hyacinth, and Wild gentian.

The flowers bloom progressively along the spike and each flower lasts 1 day.

Pickerel weed is pollinated by various insects, including one particular species of bee for which it is its only food.

Cordata is derived from Greek *cordi-* (heart) component meaning ‘heart-shaped’.

Apparently it obtained the name Pickerel weed because it is said that young pike can often be found lurking amongst it and fresh water terrapins (cooter) dine on the leaves.

Authorities have noted that the plant was used as a contraceptive by the North American Micmac and Malecite Indian tribes.

It is enjoyed by deer.

For human beings pickerel weed is viewed as a famine food. The leafstalks can be cooked as greens.