

Arrowhead

Sagittaria sagittifolia

AKA: Old World Arrowhead, Water archer, Swamp potato



Description

Arrowhead is a tall aquatic plant often found in shallow water or in the margins of slow-moving watercourses. It has three different leaf types: large emergent arrow-shaped leaves measuring 5-20 cm long on long stalks; submerged leaves which are linear and translucent and can measure up to 80 cm long and 2 cm wide; and floating leaves which are oval-lanceolate in shape.

Arrowhead flowers appear in July to August. They are small only measuring 2-3cm in diameter and have three white petals, with a purple-black spot at the base. The flowers occur in whorls of 3-5 around a spike (raceme) measuring 30-80 cm tall. The lower flowers are female with many carpels, whilst the upper flowers are male and tend to be larger and longer-stalked with many purple stamens.

The plant overwinters by detached submerged buds.

Similar species

None, the leaves are very distinctive.

Did you know?

According to Wikipedia, arrowhead (*S. sagittifolia*) is cultivated as a food crop in some countries, and is used in Chinese medicine as it has anti-microbial properties.

Other links

NatureSpot

Wildlife Trusts

Where and when to see them

The flowering plant is found in still or slow-moving fresh water from June to September, but if you want to see the flowers they are only present during July and August.

!Take care near waterbodies!

Legal status

None



