

Arrowhead

(*Sagittaria* spp.)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Also known as duck potato, arrowhead (*Sagittaria* spp.) is a perennial emergent aquatic wildflower. Its flowers each have 3 white petals, yellow centers and 3 green (often red-tinged) sepals. They are born on erect, elongated stalks. The dark green leaf blades arise from long petioles at the base of the plant. *S. latifolia* leaves are broadly ovate, while *S. lancifolia* leaves are more narrowly lance-shaped.

Arrowhead typically blooms spring through fall. It occurs naturally in marshes, swamps, streams, spring runs, rivers, lake edges and roadside ditches.

Its flowers are attractive to a variety of pollinators. Its fruits are eaten by birds and other wildlife.

The genus name *Sagittaria* is derived from the Latin word sagitta, meaning “arrow.” It refers to the leaf shape of most species within the genus. The common name “duck potato” comes from the potato-like corms that the plant produces. Despite the name, ducks do not eat the corms! Humans, however, have been eating them for centuries. *S. latifolia* is known to have the largest “potatoes.”



Sagittaria lancifolia. Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Family: Alismataceae (Water plantain family)

Native range: Mostly throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Arrowhead have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8–10

Soil: Rich, saturated to inundated soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: up to 3'+

Propagation: Seeds, division of rhizomes

Garden tips: Arrowhead is best suited for water gardens, retention ponds and drainage swales as it prefers to be inundated most of the time. It also does well in a wet container garden.