

Water Taro | *Colocasia esculenta*



Water taro stand along a river bank.



Water taro rhizomes are a popular root vegetable.



Water taro leaf.

Water taro is a non-native, water-tolerant plant that can grow and survive in water up to 1 foot deep. This species is native to Asia but has been introduced to multiple countries globally for ornamental use and as a food crop.

The leaves grow from long stalks and are **arrowhead-shaped, very large** (up to 3 feet long), and dark green. It is **often called “elephant ear”** due to its resemblance and size. Stems are up to 4 feet long and grow from large rhizomes.

Taro is an important root vegetable and is cooked much like potatoes in many countries. It is often boiled, baked, mashed, or sliced thin and made into a snack chip.

Management Value

Water taro is an attractive garden and ornamental pond species. It has a tropical appearance that many landowners desire. The tubers are popular as a human food when prepared correctly, which generally involves a quick boil followed by a slow simmer submersed in water in a covered pot.

This species provides little wildlife value; on the contrary, it tends to disrupt natural ecosystems and displace native species. Water taro can be invasive to riparian habitats and shallow waters. It should be eradicated upon first detection.

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Recommended Controls

Option 1: 2,4-D (3.8-pound formulation). For each gallon of water, mix 1.28 ounces 2,4-D and 1.3 ounces non-ionic surfactant. Spray to wet all plants. Do not exceed annual herbicide rate limits as stated on the product label.

Option 2: Triclopyr (3.0-pound formulation). For each gallon of water, mix 1.28 ounces triclopyr and 1.3 ounces non-ionic surfactant. Spray to wet all plants. Do not exceed annual herbicide rate limits as stated on the product label.

Option 3: Glyphosate (5.4-pound formulation). For each gallon of water, mix 1.28 ounces glyphosate and 1.3 ounces non-ionic surfactant. Spray to wet all plants. Do not exceed annual herbicide rate limits as stated on the product label.

Multiple applications will likely be needed to achieve eradication; combining any two of the listed herbicide treatments may enhance control.

■ Read and follow all chemical label instructions, especially the section on the use of personal protection equipment.

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By **Wes Neal**, PhD, Extension/Research Professor, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture; **Dennis Riecke**, Fisheries Coordinator, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks; and **Gray Turnage**, PhD, Assistant Research/Extension Professor, GeoSystems Research Institute.

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