THE HURST WATER MEADOW TRUST

AQUATIC PLANTS (Text and Photos by Kevin Mason 2018)

Aquatic plants face many of the same threats as aquatic invertebrates. Pollution levels can be intolerable for some species, but despite this the River Thame, millstream, and the ditches and scrapes of the Hurst Water Meadow provide habitat for a variety of aquatic plants, which in turn provide habitat and food for many animals in the meadow.

One of the more common species found in the Thame and millstream is the Branched Bur-reed which has tall sword-like leaves and is found in large patches near the margins. Another common species in the channels is Common Club-rush, with dark green pointed stems emerging from the water's faster flowing sections. Water Mint is common around the shallower margins and damp ditches and can be identified by its delicate purple flowers and strong mint smell when the leaves are crushed.

The Yellow Flag Iris is easily identified by its large yellow flowers, and can be found around the river's edges. Yellow Water Lily grows in slow flowing, deep areas. Water Forget-me-not may be found growing in large patches on the river banks, along with Great Willow-herb, blue Water Speedwell, Winter-cress, Fools' Watercress, Greater Yellow Cress, Reed Canary-grass and Pond Sedge. River Water Crowfoot is found in shallow, fast flowing stretches, with its bright white flowers poking out of the water in mid-summer. Common Duckweed grows amongst debris in the margins and backwaters of the river. Floating Sweet-grass inhabits the margins where its long, thin leaves appear limp and float, giving it its name. Damp ditches provide the conditions required for Common Water Plantain and more Pond Sedge.

Fools watercress (Apium nodiflorum)

Yellow water lily (Nuphar lutea)

Water forget-me-not (Myosotis scorpioides)

Common club-rush (Schoenoplectus lacustris)

Common water plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica)

Common duckweed (Lemna minor)

Reed canary grass (Phalaris arundinacea)

Water mint (Mentha aquatica)