



# Carolina Fanwort

*Cabomba caroliniana* Gray

**Native Origin:** South America; introduced as an aquarium plant

**Description:** Carolina fanwort is an herbaceous perennial aquatic plant in the Water-shield family (Cabombaceae) with long, branched stems and fibrous roots. Fanwort has fan-like underwater leaves of two types: submersed and floating. The submersed leaves are frequently divided, and are arranged oppositely or in whorls along the stem. The floating leaves are about two inches across and small, diamond-shaped, and infrequent. The white to pink to purplish flowers grow on stalks which arise from the tips of the stems and bloom May to September. It spreads primarily by stem fragments or rhizomes. The erect shoots are upturned extensions of horizontal rhizomes. The species forms large clones as new rhizomes and floating shoots arise as auxiliary branches. The rhizomes are fragile and easily broken, facilitating vegetative spread and transport to new water bodies.



**Habitat:** It generally grows in three to ten feet of water with low pH. The plants grow rooted in the mud of stagnant to slow flowing water, including quiet streams, smaller rivers, lakes, ponds, sloughs, and ditches.

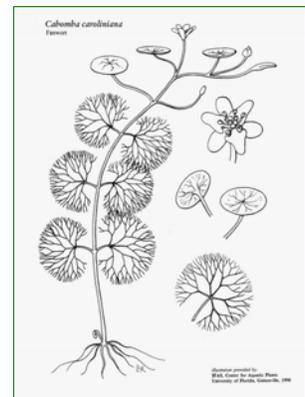
**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CA, CT, IN, MA, TN, VT, and WA.



**Ecological Impacts:** Fanwort is commonly used as an aquarium plant, but sale has been halted by many states. Once established, the dense growth of this plant can impede water flow and clog drainage of canals, and freshwater streams, thus interfering with recreational, agricultural, and aesthetic uses. It can form dense stands, crowding out previously well-established plants.

### Control and Management:

- **Chemical:** Herbicides such as Endothall and Fluridone provide excellent control, as a contact herbicide. Some reports indicate that fanwort is less sensitive to herbicides than other aquatic plants.
- **Cultural Methods:** Water level draw downs have been used to reduce fanwort growth. Extreme drying is required to prevent re-growth from seed.
- **Biocontrol:** Grass carp will eat Carolina fanwort, but it is not a preferred food.



### References:

<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/cacapic.html>, <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/cacapic.html>  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/weeds/aqua006.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/weeds/aqua006.html), <http://plants.usda.gov>,  
<http://tenn.bio.utk.edu/vascular/database>