

HANDY GUIDE

AQUATIC PLANTS AND WEEDS IN ASSAM: INDIGENOUS RESOURCES FOR LIVESTOCK AND FISH

Indigenous communities in Assam turn aquatic weeds and uncultivated plants into valuable resources. These “weeds” support nutrition, biodiversity, livestock feed, and natural farming - showcasing a sustainable, low-input approach rooted in traditional wisdom.

Weed Alligator Weed (কুকুৰাঠাৰীয়া)

An uncultivated yet widely used aquatic plant in rural Assam, known for enhancing milk yield in livestock and serving as both fodder and a leafy vegetable. It remains a key part of traditional food and farming systems.

Greater Duckweed (সৰু পুনি)

A protein-rich aquatic plant (30 to 40% dry weight) used as feed for fish like Grass Carp and Tilapia. It improves water quality and oxygen levels. Regular harvesting keeps it in check.

Water Spinach (কলমৌ শাক)

A nutrient-rich aquatic green, popular in North East Indian cuisine, valued for its medicinal uses, water-purifying ability, and as natural feed for herbivorous fish like Grass Carp.

Black Taro (ক'লা কচ) Thriving by the water's edge - a wild, iron-rich delicacy rooted in Assam's wetlands and kitchens.

White Taro (বগা কচু)

A wild Colocasia with pale stems, used in traditional dishes and pig feed. It is similar to Black Taro. Larger cultivated types, called Tapio, include Maan, Bhog, and Nol Kosu.

Pontederia Vaginalis (কনা/ভাত মেটেকা)

A wild aquatic herb of Assam's deep water paddy fields, valued for its medicinal properties, livestock fodder, and as a leafy green in traditional dishes. Even its flowers find a place in local recipes, reflecting its deep roots in rural food culture.



Zizaniopsis Miliacea (শাহি) A wild paddy lookalike found in deepwater fields with Bau Dhan, known for its coarse, infertile grains (Mota Dhan) used as natural fodder. More than a weed, it is a living symbol of rice heritage and ecological balance in Assam's wetlands.

At a Glance

- **Taro** (*Colocasia esculenta*)
- **Water Lettuce** (*Pistia stratiotes*)
- **Pontederia Vaginalis** (*Monochoria vaginalis*)
- **Greater Duckweed** (*Spirodela polyrhiza*)
- **Water Spinach/Morning Glory** (*Ipomoea aquatica*)
- **Alligator Weed** (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*)

Our heartfelt gratitude to the MISING COMMUNITY MEMBERS for generously sharing their indigenous knowledge with us.

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Elytrigia Repens (শেৰালি ঘাহ)
A perennial grass commonly found in marshes/wetlands or lowlands. It tolerates waterlogging and serves as green fodder for cattle.

**YOU CALL IT A WEED—
VILLAGERS SEE ITS VALUE.**

**WEED AS
FEED AND FODDER!!**

Uncultivated plants blur the line between a weed and resource. What may seem useless to some is a treasure to others. These floating and submerged greens are widely used as **fish and livestock feed, compost, and even for traditional herbal remedies.**



Hymenachne Amplexicaulis (দলঘাহ)
A flood-tolerant wetland grass, acts as a key fodder for cattle during floods, and is grown alongside deep water paddy like Bau Dhan.

The wetlands of Assam host rich aquatic plants, herbs, and weeds. Indigenous communities use **age-old knowledge** to turn these into **valuable resources** for nutrition, biodiversity, and livestock care. Their **low-input practices align closely with Natural Farming** principles.