

PICKEREL WEED AND LIZARD'S TAIL

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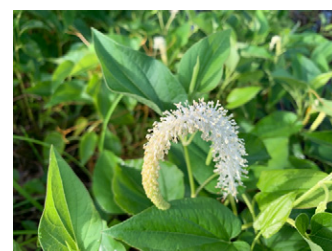
Lizards and pickerel are not very common in Beverly Shores (except for the six-lined race runner lizard or perhaps the grass pickerel) but are part of the unusual names for two beautiful, mid-summer wetland plants common in Beverly Shores and currently in bloom.



Pickerel Weed

Look in sunny standing water for the blue spikes of pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*). At Four Corners and along Beverly Drive it is a common sight, visible even while driving by. Pickerel weed has glossy, heart-shaped leaves and tall spikes of purple-blue flowers. The flowers rise 1 or 2 feet above the water surface. They produce starchy seeds eaten by both ducks and people. Pickerel weed is related to the infamous water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), native to South America. Water hyacinth has clogged many tropical waterways throughout the world, including in the state of Florida.

Lizard's Tail (*Saururus cernuus*) prefers slightly more secluded areas. It is not hard to find in moderately shady to sunny, sheltered wet sites. Lizard's tail has only two species in its family and has no cousins creating havoc somewhere else. It just possesses a graceful, nodding white spike of fragrant flowers and attractive, philodendron-like foliage. The scientific name might be easy to remember if you think of *saur* in *dinosaur* (which is just a giant lizard, after all.) *Cernuus* simply means, "nodding."



Lizard's Tail

Both of these plants are available by mail order if you have a sunny or partially sunny wet area on your property. But don't buy *Saururus chinensis* (obviously from Asia) for lizard's tail. Make sure you purchase *S. cernuus*, the native species. We certainly don't need to introduce any more potentially invasive species into the Dunes. Lizard's tail and pickerelweed would make a stunning combination. Going even farther in aquatic garden planning, think of starting the season with marsh marigold, followed by blue flag iris, then pickerelweed and lizards' tail. More beautiful aquatic plants could follow later in the season in this imaginary garden, but we will save them for another article.

The Environmental Restoration Group (ERG) will be glad to help you identify pickerel weed, lizard's tail and other plants, native and non-native. Don't hesitate to contact Terry Bonace (tbonace@gmail.com), Candice Smith candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com, or Bill Schaudt (blschaudt2@gmail.com) for assistance. Also please visit our website at www.bsrg.org for further information on invasive plants and native replacements.