

Limnophila, *Limnophila sessiliflora* (Vahl)¹

David W. Hall, Vernon V. Vandiver, Cody J. Gray²

Classification

Common Name: Limnophila

Scientific Name: *Limnophila sessiliflora*
(Vahl)

Family: Blume Scrophulariaceae, Figwort
Family

Seedling

The seedlings of *Limnophila* are reported as infestations along the shoreline (Figure 1).

Mature Plant

Limnophila is an aquatic, or nearly aquatic, perennial herb with two kinds of whorled leaves (Figure 2). The submerged stems are smooth and have leaves to 30 mm long, which are repeatedly dissected. These differ from the emergent stems which are covered with flat shiny hairs and have leaves up to 3 cm long with toothed margins. The emergent stems are usually 2-15 cm above the surface of the water. The flowers are stalkless and borne in the leaf axis. The lower portion (sepals) have five, green, hairy lobes, each 4-5 mm long. The upper



Figure 1. Seedling, *Limnophila*, *Limnophila sessiliflora* (Vahl)

portion is purple and composed of five fused petals forming a tube with two lips. The lips have distinct purple lines on the undersides. The fruit is a capsule containing up to 150 seeds.

History

Limnophila is derived from a Latin word which means pond-loving and refers to its aquatic existence. *Sessiliflora*, also Latin, means sessile-flowered and refers to this plant's stalkless flowers.

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 2. David W. Hall, former extension botanist, Herbarium, Florida Museum of Natural History; Vernon V. Vandiver, associate professor emeritus, Agronomy Department; Cody J. Gray, assistant professor, Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

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Figure 2. Mature plant, *Limnophila*, *Limnophila sessiliflora* (Vahl)

Habitat

This weed is found in or near organically stained, acidic or clear, slightly alkaline water sporadically throughout Florida. It is also naturalized in southwestern Georgia and Texas. It was introduced from the Old World.

Biology

Limnophila can grow in water up to three meters deep. Reproduction is by fragmentation of the stem or by seeds. Only a small portion of the stem is necessary for growth to occur. In late fall the mats of *Limnophila* break loose from the hydrosol. Since the fruit is mature in the late fall the floating mats spread the seeds as they move. A toxin present in the stem tissue may prevent herbivorous fish from eating the plant. It tolerates low temperatures.