

## Managing Pond Plants (Dec 2024)- Simon, Grecia, Liz

When weeding in winter, most plants will have died down, showing little or no leaf. The dilemma: is this grassy 'weeds' to be thrown away, or is it a plant we want? These are photos of some of the dilemmas we found Dec 2024, + pictures of plant when flowering.

**Brooklime** (rounded green leaves, small blue flowers)



Behind it in bucket: Possibly **Bistort** (in clump long segmented stems)



1. Stems & root-ball of **Purple Loosestrife**; Note seed heads on dead stems

2. **Hornwort**- feathery floating plant that oxygenates the water.

3. **Bogbean**: segmented stem with pointy growth tip



Pics from internet: **Bistort**



**Bogbean**



**Hornwort**



**Purple Loosestrife**



- Most plants, even if wanted will need thinning by around half- **if you accidentally throw it away it won't matter.**
- Plants that come out of water with some sort of root ball, prefer replanting in mud in shallow water.
- Feathery oxygenating plants and other rootless bits can be thrown back in, they either float, or will grow long roots from their stem to anchor in the mud at bottom.

Look out for tiny creatures: **'Nymphs'** – are the early pond based stages of **Dragonflies and Damselflies**: they can be tiny to quite large (0.5cm- 2cm) depending on age. They will crawl back into the pond if muddy debri is left on the edge for a few days- or put them back in.



Water louse : *Asellus aquaticus* (5mm)



(Ramshorn) snail



and unidentified eggs



Damselfly nymph (5-6mm)



## Identifying 'nymphs' and other creatures.

Having just read the book! We did it all wrong.



**Damselflies** : are thin and long, 6 legs, & are identified by their 3 'tail paddles' – actually called 'caudal lamellae'. Some are shaped like feathers, some like leaves with veins, some have dark markings. To see these tiny structures take photos in clear water so they fan out and show. (catch it in plastic tub & put in cleanish water). Full grown larval length 15-40 mm depending on species. Ours was tiny max 5mm so a very young one. In the south they mostly metamorphose into damselflies after a year – occasionally 2 yrs.



**Dragonflies:** are short and squat, some look like spiders or crabs. They have blunt, square tail ends: they are identified by overall shape, number of tiny protrusions at the tail end and shape of spines down their 'back bones'. You will need both top down and sideways pic's to identify. Full grown larval length: 13 – 56mm depending on species. Some spend as long as 5 years as nymphs before turning into dragonflies.

(we didn't find any this time but we have seen Broad bodied chasers, Red darters & Southern Hawkers laying in our pond.)

**Water lice:** look like tiny woodlice. They are very common in ponds (apparently) see <http://www.uk-wildlife.co.uk/water-louse-asellus-aquaticus/>