



The Amazing Aquatic Plant



Hey guys!
Let's learn
together!



What are aquatic plants? Plants that complete all or part of their life cycle (live, reproduce, grow) in water are **aquatic plants**. Aquatic plants come in many different shapes and sizes, but they can be categorized into three main types. Plants that rise above the water but usually have roots in the shallow water along the shoreline are called **emergents**. Plants that drift or float freely on the surface of the water are known as **floating** plants, and plants that live almost entirely under the water are **submersed** plants.



Why are native aquatic plants important?

Native aquatic plants are very important to aquatic and terrestrial **ecosystems** providing shelter for organisms to hide, reproduce, and feed, as well as supplying a food source to many types of animals. They also add oxygen to the water and take in pollutants and unhealthy contaminants that can run into the water. Another benefit is that they help stabilize the shorelines reducing **erosion**. Without aquatic plants many animals would not be able to survive!



So, why don't we want certain aquatic plants in our water?

We do want to keep the native aquatic plant populations healthy; however, when an **introduced** or **nonindigenous** aquatic plant species is placed into one of the healthy aquatic ecosystems many problems begin. These nonindigenous plants can outcompete the native plants and eventually replace the natives. When this happens the entire ecosystem changes and the aquatic organisms no longer have their habitat or food supply. If the species is **invasive**, the infestation can become so bad that the water body becomes completely covered by the new plant, smothering out all other plants. Aquatic animals also may suffer by being “suffocated” due to the lack of oxygen in the water, because of the high levels of oxygen needed to decompose the organic matter from the invasive plants. Invasive plants can also affect us by preventing us from being able to swim, fish, boat, or do any other recreational activity on the water.



How are nonindigenous plants introduced? Plants may be introduced to a new area by accident or on purpose. Many aquatic plants are introduced by people that place aquarium plants into the water, or by boaters who carry fragments of these plants on the motors. Water gardeners may introduce nonindigenous plants when their ponds overflow or on purpose because they think the plant is pretty.

Matching: Let's See What You Know!

Directions: Match the word on the left with its correct definition on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ___1. aquatic plant | a. the study of plants |
| ___2. native | b. community of organisms and its environment |
| ___3. nonindigenous | c. reproduce rapidly; take over |
| ___4. invasive | d. place where a plant or animal lives |
| ___5. terrestrial | e. occurs naturally in a particular place |
| ___6. erosion | f. spends most of its life cycle in the water |
| ___7. ecosystem | g. does not occur naturally |
| ___8. habitat | h. living on land |
| ___9. botany | i. to use living organisms to control |
| ___10. biocontrol | j. washing away of soil |

Aquatic Plant Word Find*

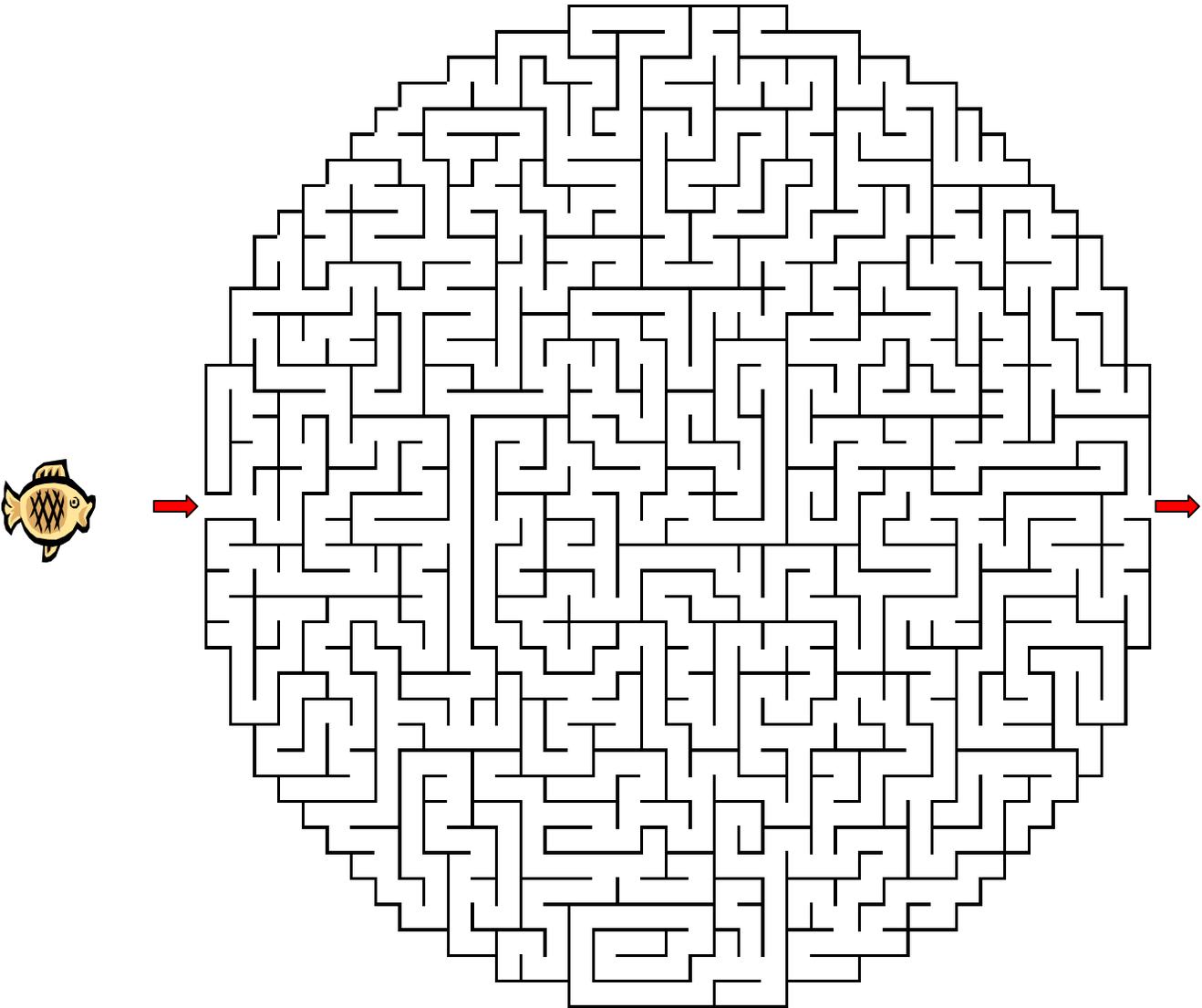
l n a g s u h t s d e i m r i d z c n u
n o z n c b a n e t n z e p h k r q v l
r o r k s t q s u v h e t w l i r k o t
z e y t i r r g a b l e s v j m z h i v
w m p b n e j s d o r f y y r e w o l f
a f a r m o i y h a g o s a m c i n m x
t h p b o v c x i n t r o d u c e w p e
e n u z e d w o s z i e c t m v d j m e
r s t y y k u u i g r j e p o q g x m n
s r l n n f n c s b f s h m v q l h n l
h v e a e e d e e c l o g n i t a o l f
e k a t g g s e e d t s p e c i e s f p
d c f o b k r s u o n e g i d n i n o n
w i y b r z g e s u f b a p r o a e j k
d t f m t s o y m i a h g a v o r h v l
q a x t q c n p v e v c c t a z l b e k
r u z t y t a t z m z a g r o y v k k y
p q z c h n t p t b r u h l l f x e q v
f a d e a f t l m j v f j z e o x k y j
h q s t g m x c i i m v a o b o n t g i
r i i p x c s b i t b e n m d d m l m d
s v r f m p a t q q t b t l d w z b u o
e m h y q w n k f s t p d h a e z r b s
y r p a q e p q i o e y q l o b c n c v
q w g b h e u n y k z l u h y q c w d u

Find these words

- Aquatic
- Biocontrol
- Botany
- Ecosystem
- Emergent
- Floating
- Flower
- Foodweb
- Genus
- Habitat
- Impact
- Introduce
- Invasive
- Leaf
- Native
- Nonindigenous
- Photosynthesis
- Reproduce
- Rhizome
- Root
- Seed
- Species
- Submersed
- Watershed

Nonindigenous Species Maze*

Directions: Please help **Freddy** the Fish find his way through this pond where he lives. He can no longer stay here because the pond is now infested with invasive plants. Help him escape to a new healthy pond!!!



*Word Find and Maze created with Puzzlemaker on DiscoverySchool.com
Answer key for all activities on the back of this page!

Matching, Word Find and Maze Solutions:

Matching: 1. f 2. e 3. g 4. c 5. h 6. j 7. b 8. d 9. a 10. i

