

Can I collect and grow aquatic plants in my classroom?

The answer is **YES**, but these activities are regulated by the state and require a few permits (described below). **NOTE:** We recommend that you apply for the permits well in advance as it may take two to twelve weeks to receive them, depending on the backlog of requests received by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DOACS).



Native Aquatic Plants:

- To grow native aquatic plants, you must have a nursery registration or have your school registered through the **Florida FFA Association** www.flaffa.org. Both of these options have a fee associated with them. The nursery registration application can be found online from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DOACS): <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/onestop/forms/08004.pdf>.
- To collect **non-prohibited** aquatic plants from the wild, you need to apply for a **Permit to Collect Non-Prohibited Aquatic Plants**. This can be obtained by contacting the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DOACS)** at (352) 372-3505. Remember: You will need permission from the land owner to collect plants from private property. Detailed information about the collection site must also be included.

Non-native/prohibited plants (e.g., water hyacinth or alligator weed):

- For possessing these plants, you will **NOT** need the nursery registration or the Florida FFA association membership, as it is illegal to propagate these plants. Instead, you can obtain the **Application and Permit to Move Organisms Regulated by the State of Florida**. This will allow you to be issued a permit to possess these plants in a controlled environment for educational purposes. You may obtain this by contacting DOACS at (352) 372-3505 or apply online with form **DACS-08208**: <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/onestop/forms/08208.pdf>.

IMPORTANT: Please be sure that native plants are obtained with the permission of the land owner and that **non-native plants are disposed of in a responsible manner (sealed in a garbage bag and placed in the household garbage.)** If you have any questions about these permits, you can contact the folks at DOACS (352) 372-3505.



ANOTHER OPTION: The UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants has put together a Freshwater Artificial Plant Kit. This kit includes ten life-like artificial plants that are both native and non-native. Teachers may borrow this kit for up to 2 weeks to use in their classroom. This is a good way to familiarize students with some of the common aquatic species, look at plant structures, and compare/contrast characteristics among the plants, etc. To obtain a loaner copy (or information on how to assemble one yourself), contact us at caip-education@ufl.edu or call 352.392.6843.

