

## BLUE WATERLEAF

*Hydrolea ovata* Nutt. ex

Choisy

Plant Symbol = HYOV

Contributed By: USDA NRCS Nacogdoches (TX)  
Technical Office and the National Plant Data Center



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### Alternate Names

Hairy hydrolea, false fiddleleaf, ovate falsefiddleleaf

### Uses

This plant is utilized for wetland restoration.

### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

### Description

**General:** Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae).  
*Hydrolea ovata*, a native, rhizomatous perennial, which rarely reaches a height of more than 2 feet, is a very distinctive plant due to its spiny stems and deep blue flowers. Leaves are entire, alternate, somewhat oval in shape and deep green in color. A single spine (usually 0.5-inch long) arises from each leaf node.

No similar genera are found in wet sites in Texas. There are three (some argue 4) species of *Hydrolea* in Texas. *Hydrolea spinosa* is more common in south Texas and is very similar to *Hydrolea ovata*. *Hydrolea uniflora* is more common in east Texas, eastern Oklahoma, and the southeastern US and does

not have very showy flowers. Other species of *Hydrolea* are found in southeastern U.S. without spines, or only a few spines. All *Hydrolea* species are found in wet areas and have the deep blue flowers.

### Distribution

Found from Texas and Missouri to Florida. For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Establishment

**Adaptation:** *Hydrolea ovata* is an obligate wetland plant (found in wetlands 99% of the time) and likes full sun. It is found most commonly in depressions, roadside ditches that pond water for long periods, and ponded areas in pastures of the Gulf Coast Prairie, Pineywoods, and Post-Oak Savanna regions of Texas. It is also very common along livestock pond edges, often forming monoculture stands.

### Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture." These plant materials are somewhat available from commercial sources.

### References

Davis, L. 2000. *Texas plant fact sheet: Hydrolea ovata*. USDA, NRCS, Nacogdoches Technical Office #2, Nacogdoches, Texas.

USDA, NRCS 2000. *The PLANTS database*. <<http://plants.usda.gov>>. 001206. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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Plant Materials <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>

Plant Fact Sheet/Guide Coordination Page <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/pfs.html>>

National Plant Data Center <<http://npdc.usda.gov>>

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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