

Chara

(muskgrass)

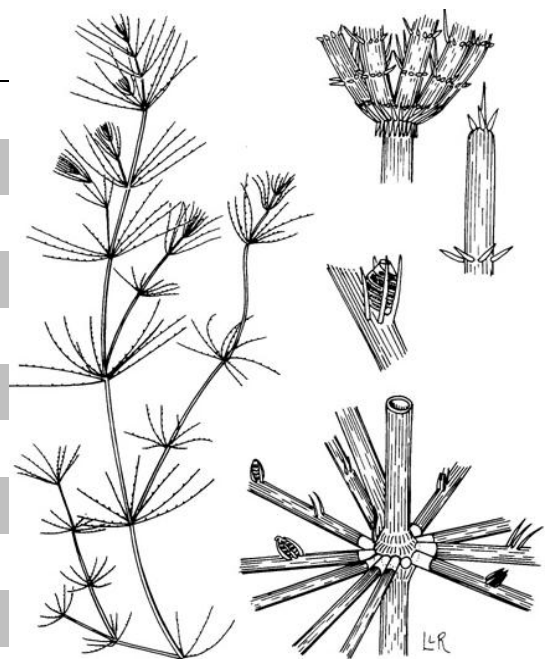
[*Chara sp.*]

DESCRIPTION

Chara can appear to be a plant that would produce flowers and seeds however it is actually a multi-cellular macro-alga. Chara grows attached to the bottoms of ponds, lakes, rivers, and ditches, and can form submersed beds of vegetation. Individual plants can range in size; from a few inches in length to several feet in length. Chara has whorls of 6-8 branchlets that arise from nodes along the stem. Monoecious and dioecious species exist, but vegetative plants persist year-round. During times of reproduction, dark, ball-like sporangia appear seed-like along the branchlets. Chara is also known to have a strong garlic odor. Once identified by smell, it will be remembered. This macro-alga has no true "leaves", only branches and branchlets.



| CHARACTERISTIC | DESCRIPTION |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Growth Season | |
| Growth Habit | submerged |
| Leaflet Number | many |
| Leaf Margin | serrated |
| Leaf Hairs | absent |
| Leaf/Leaflet Shape | finely dissected |
| Leaf Length | 1 inch to >2 feet |
| Leaf Arrangement | whorled |
| Root Type | |
| Flower Color | |





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References:

Line drawings:

University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. Used with permission. Available online from <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/slidecol.html>

Text:

Aulback-Smith, C. A., and de Kozlowski, S. J. 1996. Aquatic and Wetland Plants of South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.