

# Evaluation of the Antipollution Potential of some Aquatic Plants in an Artificial Wetland: *Eichhomia crassipes* (Mart.)..

陳銘耀、彭元興

E-mail: 9607562@mail.dyu.edu.tw

## ABSTRACT

At the Huaren wetland, Changhwa, Taiwan, we conducted a study to examine the effects of planting various aquatic plants, such as water hyacinth (*Eichhomia crassipes* (Mart.) Solm.-Laub.), water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes* L.) etc. in a S-shaped artificial channel on the amelioration of water quality parameters such as the total suspended solids (TSS), chemical oxygen demand (COD), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), pH, electrical conductivity, and dissolved oxygen (DO). The results indicate that TSS removal was 50~75 %, COD removal as 50~60 %, BOD removal was ca. 75 %. Because the inflow polluted water had varying pollution loading, the channel needs to have sufficient hydraulic retention time (HRT) and slow flow to allow cleansing of the water through settling and filtration of the SS, and due to the entrainment of small particles in the polluted water by the interstices of soil particles, thus the longer the HRT, the better the removal rate became. With regard to electrical conductivity, there was an apparent lowering effect, with treated effluent all conforming to the water quality requirement of irrigation water (750  $\mu$  s/cm). After passing the S-shaped artificial channel in the wetland, the effluent conformed to the wastewater discharging standards and allow the ensuing ecological pond to operate at low pollution loading conditions. At our lab, we conducted experiments to examine the efficacies of various aquatic plants on pollutant removal. The water hyacinth removed 27 % of the electrical conductivity in winter and showing the best performance. COD removal by the species, on the other hand, was the highest in spring and summer at 90.9 %. At all seasons, the removal exhibited a first-order reaction mode, but the rate constants were faster during these 2 seasons with  $k_1 = 0.64$  and  $0.58$ , respectively. Removal of BOD<sub>5</sub> reached 75 % in winter which was the best. The first 72 h showed a zero-order reaction mode ( $k_0 = 0.31$ ) and the later 72 h exhibited a first-order reaction mode ( $k_1 = 1.00$ ). As for water spinach (*Ipomoea aquatica* Forsk), the electrical conductivity removal was the highest in winter reaching 32.1 %. The reaction then was a first-order reaction having a rate constant  $k_1 = 0.26$ , the fastest among the seasons. COD removal reached 90.9 % in spring and summer and both seasons showed a first-order reaction with  $k_1 = 0.39$  and  $0.57$ , respectively. The latter was the best rate constant for all seasons. Removal of BOD<sub>5</sub> with the species reached 95 % in summer and showing a first-order mode with  $k_1 = 0.62$ . Water lettuce showed the best electrical conductivity in winter as well reaching a removal rate of 25.6 %, which showed a first-order mode with rate constant  $k_1 = 0.25$ . Removal of COD was the best during spring and summer at 90.9 %. The reaction order (first-order) was the same for all seasons. The rates were faster in spring and summer had constants of  $k_1 = 0.63$  and  $0.65$ , respectively. The removal of BOD<sub>5</sub> by the species reached 85 % in summer and 87.5 % in winter. Both exhibited a first-order mode and had rate constants of  $k_1 = 0.50$  and  $0.58$ , respectively. The last aquatic plant examined, *Hygrophila pogonocalyx* Hayata, removed 35.6% of the electrical conductivity in winter, which showed a first-order reaction mode with rate constant of  $k_1 = 0.57$ . The results suggest that this species was the most effective in lowering electrical conductivity. For COD and BOD removals, both were more effective in spring and summer. The probable cause was that decomposition of organic substances is mostly aerobic, and the longer periods of sunlight in those seasons lead to greater photosynthesis of the plants and greater oxygen releases which in turn fosters greater microbial activities. The higher removal efficacy of the *Hygrophila pogonocalyx* Hayata, on the other hand, might have something to do with its flowering in winter. Establishment of the Huaren wetland park not only consolidated a team of volunteers from the community, but also led to improved ambient environment. Thus it contributed to the enhancement of living quality of the community, becoming a center of recreational activities for the residents and a demonstration showcase of ecological education. Furthermore, the wetland purifies water and possesses the function of ecological restoration.

Keywords : Huaren Community, free surface wetland system, artificial wetland, ecological pond, water quality improvement, kinetics.

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