

Eurasian Watermilfoil WATCH



Photo Credit: Susan Warren

How to Identify Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)

Illustration: Ann Bove

Small reddish flowers above water (mid-summer)

Stems branch near water surface

Long, stringy stems

3-5 feathery leaves arranged in whorls (circles) on stems

Each leaf with 12-21 leaflet pairs



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.

Clean all recreational equipment.

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*Project of the Great Lakes Sea Grant
Network and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

General Characteristics

- Found in waters less than 20 feet (6 meters) deep
- May form mats in waters less than 15 feet (4.5 meters) deep
- A native look-alike, northern watermilfoil, has fewer (5-10) leaflet pairs

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Eurasian watermilfoil is a feathery submerged aquatic plant that can quickly form thick mats in shallow areas of lakes and rivers in North America. These mats can interfere with swimming and entangle propellers, which hinders boating, fishing, and waterfowl hunting. Heavy infestations may reduce property values. Matted milfoil can displace native aquatic plants, impacting fish and wildlife.

Since it was discovered in North America in the 1940s, Eurasian watermilfoil has invaded nearly every U.S. state and at least three Canadian provinces. Milfoil spreads when plant pieces break off and float on water currents. It can cross land to new waters by clinging to sailboats, personal watercraft, powerboats, motors, trailers, and fishing gear. Eradicating established infestations is nearly impossible. Your help detecting and reporting new infestations is vital for preventing their spread.

What you can do

- **Learn** to identify Eurasian watermilfoil (see back cover).
- **Inspect** and remove aquatic plants and animals from boat, motor, and trailer.
- **Drain** lake or river water from livewell and bilge.
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait in the trash.
- **Rinse** boat and equipment with high-pressure hot water (104° F), especially if moored for more than a day. OR
- **Dry** everything for at least 5 days.
- **Report** new sightings – note exact location; wrap a plant fragment in a wet paper towel, place in a sealed plastic bag; and call the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Extension in Zion, IL, (847) 872-8677; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in Topeka, IL, (309) 968-7531 Ext. 226; or the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, in Indianapolis, IN, (317) 234-3883.

REMINDER: Know the rules!

Specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but some jurisdictions prohibit or discourage possession and transport of Eurasian watermilfoil and other invasive aquatic plants and animals. Contact your local natural resource management agency for instructions. Unauthorized introduction of plants or fish into the wild is illegal. **Protect your property and our waters.**