

Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)

What does Eurasian water-milfoil look like?

Eurasian water-milfoil is an submersed aquatic plant with feather-like leaves arranged on the stem in whorls. Each leaf contains 12 to 21 pairs of leaflets. The tips of stem tips are tassel-like, and branching is abundant in water 3 to 10 feet deep.

Where does Eurasian water-milfoil grow?

The plant's preferred habitats are lakes, reservoirs, ponds, and low flow areas of streams and river. EWM prefers waters 2-10 feet deep and can tolerate a wide range of water temperatures, from frozen lakes in Canada to shallow bays in Florida. In Kentucky, EWM occurs in some northern counties along the Ohio River and scattered throughout some western counties.

How did Eurasian water-milfoil arrive here?

Eurasian water-milfoil was accidentally introduced in the 1940s to eastern North America from Europe, most likely when aquarium owners released aquarium contents into local lakes. EWM flourished and began to spread westward by clinging to recreational boats.

How does Eurasian water-milfoil spread?

Naturally, Eurasian water-milfoil spreads through underground runners, but this species also spreads when the plant fragments into smaller pieces that float away, take root, and start new populations in new waters or in other areas of a lake. Transport of fragments occurs when they become attached to watercraft or are carried by water currents to new areas. Oftentimes, as a boat passes through infested waters, fragments become entangled on propellers, and if not removed, these fragments can introduce the plant to new waters.

Why is Eurasian Water-milfoil a problem?

EWM can form dense underwater stands of tangled stems and vast mats of vegetation on the water surface, especially in shallow, nutrient-rich water. These mats can limit boating, swimming, and fishing. EWM can disrupt the ecology of a water body by shading and crowding out native aquatic plants. Because it interferes with shoreline access to shallow waters, it can adversely affect property values.

How can you prevent the spread of Eurasian Water-milfoil?

- Avoid boating or trolling through heavily vegetated areas. Cut motor and pole if possible.
- Remove any visible plants from boat, trailer, truck, and other equipment (anchors, centerboards, rollers, axles, propellers, waders, etc.) before leaving any water body.
- Drain any water from boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers BEFORE leaving water body;
- Disinfect live wells, bilges, anchors, bait buckets, boat trailers, and nets with a saltwater solution (1.25 cups of salt per 10 gallons of water) or hot (105 °F) water. Don't drain this solution into lakes or streams. It can harm aquatic life.
- Dry boats and equipment thoroughly in the hot sun before using again.
- Do not release any plants from the aquarium or water garden into or near a body of water or storm drain.
- Teach others about EWM and its threats to native plants.



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