

Eurasian Watermilfoil



flower



leaves



seeds

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Genus: *Myriophyllum*

Species: *spicatum*

Priority Listing: 1B

Perennial

Aquatic

Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) is native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa. EWM is a submerged aquatic plant that grows in still or slow moving water. Introduced to North America in the 1940s, EWM has spread rapidly in lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers. EWM is now found in much of North America.

Eurasian watermilfoil has the ability to establish in areas where native aquatic vegetation is not well established; here it crowds out native vegetation and spreads quickly. EWM is able to spread rapidly because new infestations can begin from fragments or pieces of the plant. EWM has become a threat to native **flora** and **fauna** as well as water recreational activities due to the dense floating mats that infestations create.

EWM is a submerged plant that has slender stems that typically grow up to 9' long but can be longer in suitable growing conditions. Flowers of EWM are red to pink and are inconspicuously produced in the leaf **axils** on a spike that grows vertically above the surface of the water.

The leaves are submerged, grow in **whorls** of four, are feather-like, and have 12 to 21 pairs of thread-like

leaflets. There are several types of native milfoil that occur in North America and it is easy to confuse these native milfoils with the **invasive** EWM. You can determine the difference between native northern milfoil and EWM because northern milfoil typically has fewer than 12 pairs of thread-like leaflets on each leaf and leaves are held more erect when out of the water as compared to EWM, whose leaves collapse against the stem when held out of the water. Identification can be so difficult that DNA analysis is often needed to determine identity. The most common way that EWM is spread is through distribution by watercraft. Even the smallest fragment of an EWM plant can be carried to a new, un-infested location and establish a new infestation. As a responsible outdoor recreationalist, remember the phrase:

“Inspect. Clean. Dry.”

1. Inspect your watercraft and equipment for vegetative matter every time you remove your boat and equipment from the water.

2. Clean your watercraft and equipment.

3. Dry your watercraft and equipment completely before placing it in a new water body. It can take days in hot sunny weather to weeks in cooler moist conditions for the plants to stop being **viable**. Any moisture can allow EWM to survive even if not submerged in water!

Aquatic: living or growing on, in, or near the water

Axil: the upper angle formed where a leaf stalk meets the stem

Flora: plant life considered part of a group, such as in a region or time

Fauna: animal life considered part of a group, such as in a region or time

Invasive: marked by the tendency to spread or intrude

Perennial: a plant whose life spans several years

Viable: capable of growing or developing

Whorl: an arrangement of three or more leaves or petals originating from a single point or node