

Exotic Invasive Aquatic Plants of Concern in Vermont and Local Native Look-alikes

Exotic
Curly-leaf pondweed

Exotic
Hydrilla

Native
Common Elodea

Native
Coontail

Exotic
Water chestnut

Native
Watermilfoil

Exotic
Egeria

Exotic
Variable watermilfoil

Native
Nuttalls waterweed

Exotic
Eurasian watermilfoil

Native
Bladderwort

Native
Pondweed

Established in Vermont

An invader of lakes, rivers and wetlands, **Eurasian watermilfoil**, a submersed rooted perennial species, is known for its delicate, feathery appearance.

- Look for**
- whorls of leaves around the stem, 4 are common but often 3 to 6 can be found
 - each leaf is divided into pairs of thread-like segments, typically 12 or more
 - sometimes the tops of the plant exhibits a reddish color

Note: With a number of native watermilfoils in Vermont, all leafy watermilfoils are suspect until a positive identification can be obtained.

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Although the densest populations currently exist in Lake Champlain, **water chestnut** also invades numerous other Vermont lakes, wetlands and quiet tributaries. This annual aquatic plant overwinters entirely by seed.

- Look for**
- 2 distinct leaf types: triangular shaped floating leaves with toothed margins and an inflated spongy leaf stem arranged in a radiating pattern, and feathery, finely divided underwater leaves whorled around the underwater stem
 - fruit that is a woody, nutlike seed with 4 sharp, barbed spines

Note: No other aquatic plant in Vermont looks like water chestnut.

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Curly-leaf pondweed, a submersed, rooted perennial, can be found in a number of Vermont lakes, ponds and some streams.

- Look for**
- reddish-green, wavy, mature leaves with finely toothed margins
 - branching stems that are slightly flattened
 - burr-like winter buds called turions, which are hard and prickly and form where a leaf attaches to a stem

Note: Although sometimes confused with our native pondweeds (*Potamogeton* sp.), curly-leaf pondweeds wavy mature leaves with finely toothed margins are unique to this species.

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Variable watermilfoil is the most recent aquatic plant invader in Vermont. It is a rooted, submersed, perennial aquatic plant. Underwater leaves are finely divided into segments giving them a feather-like appearance.

- Look for**
- densely packed whorls of 4 to 6 underwater leaves around the stem
 - each underwater leaf has 7 to 11 pairs of segments
 - on more mature plants, blade-like leaves above the water surface with serrated edges
 - thick, robust, reddish stems

Note: See *Eurasian watermilfoil* note.

Not Confirmed in Vermont...yet!

A recent northeastern U.S. invader, **hydrilla** has not been confirmed in Vermont waters. A submersed rooted perennial, this species is highly adaptable to a wide range of environmental conditions.

- Look for**
- leaves in whorls of 3 to 8 joined directly to the stem
 - visibly toothed leaf margins; sometimes, 1 or more spines on the underside of the leaf
 - small, potato-like tubers at the end of underground stems

Note: This species is considered one of the most problematic aquatic plant invaders. Preventing its introduction into Vermont waters is imperative.

A plant widely distributed in the U.S. by the aquarium trade, **Brazilian elodea** is a submersed rooted perennial.

- Look for**
- oblong to linear shaped pointed leaves arranged in whorls, 4 are common but sometimes 3 to 5 can be found
 - generally bright green leaves and stems

Note: Unlike hydrilla, Brazilian elodea does not produce tubers.



whorl
Eurasian watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum



water chestnut
Trapa natans



Curly-leaf pondweed
Potamogeton crispus



Variable watermilfoil
Myriophyllum heterophyllum



hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata



Brazilian elodea
Egeria densa

Help stop the spread of these and other aquatic invaders. Please, DO NOT dump or transport aquatic plants into or from any waterbody!