

EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL



WHAT IS EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL?

Eurasian watermilfoil is a submerged aquatic plant that grows in still or slow-moving water. It has slender stems up to 3 meters long. Its leaflets are borne in whorls of four and typically have 12 to 21 pairs of leaflets. In nutrient-rich lakes Eurasian watermilfoil can form thick underwater stands of tangled stems with vast mats of vegetation at the water's surface. Eurasian watermilfoil was first detected in Minnesota in 1987 in Lake Minnetonka. Since then it has been found in 160 lakes, rivers and streams in Minnesota.

HOW IS EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL SPREAD?

A key factor in the plant's success is its ability to reproduce through stem fragmentation and runners. A single segment of stem and leaves can take root and form a new colony. Fragments clinging to boats and trailers can spread the plant from lake to lake. The mechanical clearing of aquatic plants for beaches, docks, and landings can create thousands of new stem fragments.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Eurasian watermilfoil is known to crowd out native plants. In shallow areas the plant can interfere with water recreation such as boating, fishing, and swimming.

CONTROL

Most problems caused by milfoil can be managed with conventional methods such as treatment with herbicides or mechanical removal of plants. Monitoring and prevention are the most important steps for keeping Eurasian watermilfoil under control. A sound precautionary measure is to check all equipment used in infested waters and remove all aquatic vegetation upon leaving a lake or river. All equipment, including boats, motors, trailers, and fishing/diving equipment, should be free of aquatic plants.

