

## Eurasian Water Milfoil and Northern Water Milfoil


### Can you tell them apart?

I recently wrote an article about aquatic invasive species (AIS) monitoring and explained that it is important to have citizens out on their lakes looking for new AIS so that pioneer populations can be dealt with quickly to eradicate them. I think it is also valuable for lake residents to know what aquatic plants, native and non-native, are already in their lake. Although every lake is going to have different plants, there are some that are quite common. Unfortunately *Myriophyllum spicatum*, Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) is very common in SE Wisconsin. In fact it has been recorded in 30 of our Walworth County Lakes.

EWM is often confused with *M. sibericum*, Northern water milfoil, which is one of 7 milfoils native to Wisconsin. At first glance, the two species do look the same but when shown together in these educational publications from the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, EWM has some distinctive characteristics that make it easy to identify. For instance, EWM usually has 12 to 21 leaflet pairs per leaf and Northern water milfoil generally has only 7 to 10 leaflet pairs. In addition, the leaflets of EWM are the same length, while the Northern water milfoil leaflets are not.

Next time you are out on the lake see if you can determine which milfoil you see. However, please do not drop the milfoil back into the lake. One small piece of EWM can grow into a whole new patch so if it is EWM you may inadvertently spread this nasty invasive to a new part of the lake.

### Eurasian Water-Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)



Non-native

Highly invasive plant, able to form dense mats near the surface that entangle motor boat propellers and interfere with swimming. Spread by watercraft and trailers.

- Delicate feather-like leaves. Leaflets are mostly the same length.
- Leaves are usually limp when out of water.
- Leaves arranged in whorls (circles) of 3 to 5 around stem.
- Usually 12 to 21 leaflet pairs per leaf.
- Long spaghetti-like stems.

If you suspect a new infestation, report it to your local DNR service center.

Printed on Recycled Paper 17/04

### Northern Water-Milfoil (*Myriophyllum sibericum*)



One of the seven native milfoils found in Wisconsin. A valuable plant that offers shade, shelter and foraging opportunities for fish.

- Rigid feather-like leaves forming a Christmas tree shape. The lower leaflets are usually quite long.
- Leaves usually stiff when out of water.
- Leaves arranged in whorls (circles) of 4 to 6 around stem.
- Usually 7 to 10 leaflet pairs per leaf.
- Stem is usually whitish or whitish green in color.



STOP AQUATIC INTRUDERS  
Protect the Lakes of Wisconsin  
The Aquatic Invasives