

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program

Invasive Plant Profile

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Myriophyllum spicatum

Biology:

A submerged, perennial aquatic plant that grows in fresh inland water and fresh to brackish coastal waters. Stems have leaves arranged in whorls around the stem. Growing tips are tassel-like and reddish in color. It can reach surface waters while rooted in 3-5 meters of water and is capable of both sexual and vegetative reproduction. During late summer, tiny pink flowers may occur on red emergent spikes that stand several inches above the water.

Habitat:

Plants prefer still, shallow water and muddy shores with fine-textured inorganic sediments. Growth is less successful on steeply sloping shores and basins. Relative to other submerged aquatics, Eurasian Watermilfoil requires high light. Plants can survive under ice cover.

Origin:

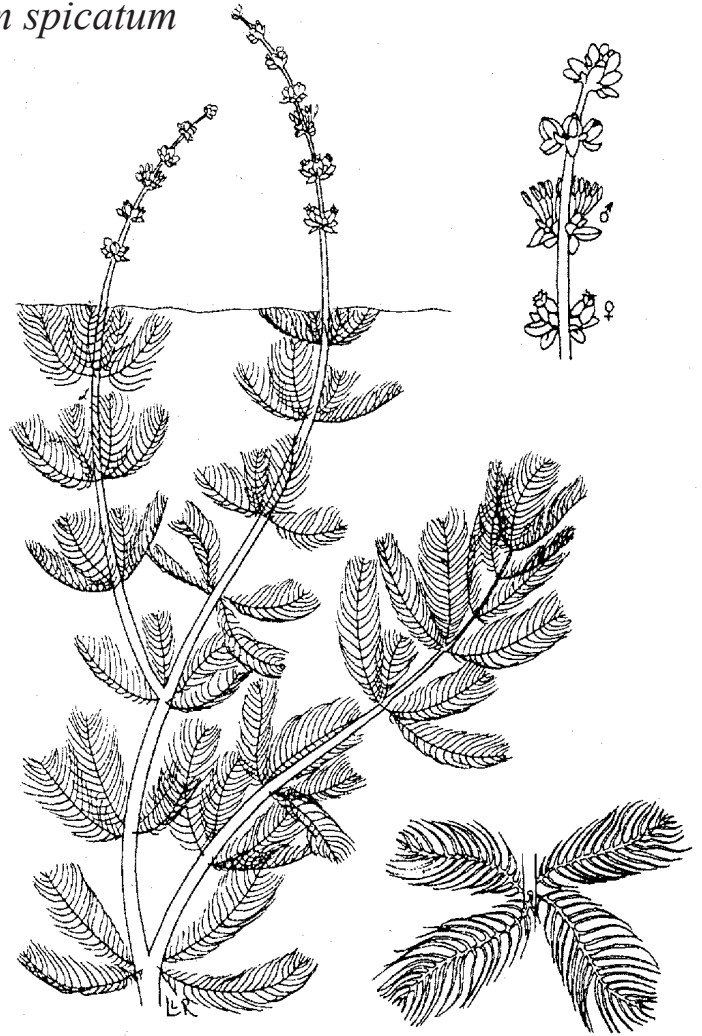
Native to Eurasia and Africa.

NY and Adirondack Range:

Expanding through Northeastern New York, particularly in the Hudson River - Albany region and the lakes in the foothills and mountains of the Adirondacks, especially Warren, Essex, and Franklin counties.

Spread:

Introduced in the Chesapeake Bay Area in the late 19th century. The primary means of dispersal is plant regeneration from fragmented stems. Plant fragments are spread by waterways, animals, and motorboats.



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Problems:

Produces dense water canopies that shade out native plants, including waterfowl food plants. Infestations result in decreased oxygen levels under plant mats and an elevated pH. The decomposition of plant mass at the end of the season results in nitrogen and phosphorous loading. Eurasian Watermilfoil also provides breeding grounds for mosquitoes, interferes with navigation and recreation, and clogs water intakes.