THE ELEVEN INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS OF MOST CONCERN IN MAINE

Hydrilla Infestation

There are non-native aquatic plants invading fresh water lakes and ponds in the northeastern U.S. These plants have arrived from Europe and Asia, and have no natural predators in North America. They proliferate rapidly and take over the shoreline waters, crowding out native plants and creating large, dense, almost impenetrable mats. These mats make swimming, boating and fishing literally impossible and ruin the ecologic and economic value of the waterbody.

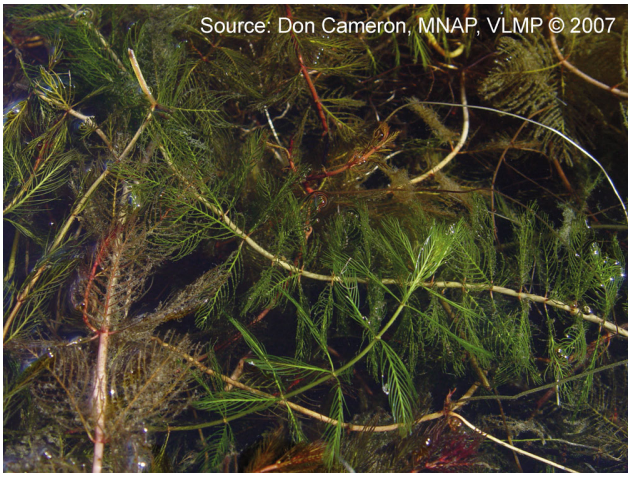
Many lakes in New England have infestations of these plants, which are very difficult to eradicate and almost impossible once they have spread into large mats. Fortunately less than 1% of Maine lakes are infested, but most of these are in the southwestern part of the state close to the Kezar Lake Watershed.

There is an aggressive effort carried out by the Town of Lovell's Invasive Plant Protection Committee (LIPPC) to prevent these plants from invading the Kezar Lake Watershed by conducting boat inspections, shoreline patrolling, and educational efforts. You can find more details about these invaders and how to identify them at: https://lovellmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Invasive-Plant-Catalogue-flip-book-2012.pdf

Images from the Lake Stewards of Maine: lakestewardsofmaine.org

Variable water-milfoil
The most common invasive aquatic plant in Maine. Submersed plant rooted at the bottom with feather-divided whorled leaves densely packed along multiple stems giving a bottle brush appearance. 4-6 leaves per whorl. Flowered spikes emerge at times above the surface. Cushman Pond in the Kezar Lake Watershed has been infested with this plant and the Town has been conducting a mitigation effort using divers for over 20 years to eradicate it.

Eurasian water-milfoil
Submersed plant with dense, spreading roots as in Variable water-milfoil also with feather-divided leaves arranged in 4-6 whorls but less dense than for Variable water-milfoil. Tips of the leaves appear blunt. Also sends an emergent flowered spike above the surface.



Hydrilla
Rooted submersed plant with long, slender, branching stems populated with strap-like leaves arranged in whorls of 4-8. Lower whorls of 3. Small white flowers on emergent spike. Spreads very rapidly.

Curly-Leaf pondweed
Submersed with branching, slightly flatted stems. Blade shaped leaves with small edge serrations and a veined pattern like leaded glass. Mature leaves are ruffled like a lasagna noodle. Emergent spikes have small flowers at the end of the stalk.

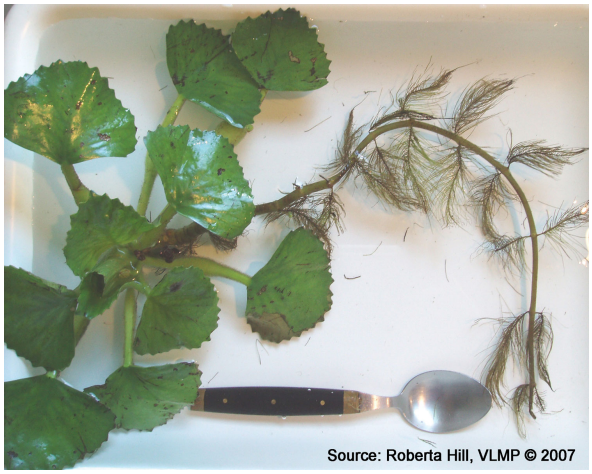
Brazilian waterweed (elodea)
Submersed plant buoyant near the surface. Green leaves in dense whorls of 4-6 leaves along tightly packed stems. Lower leaves can occur in opposite pairs or whorls of 3. Leaves are blade shaped with very fine serrated edges. Flowers are small and white with a yellow center on slender stalks above the surface.

European naiad
Submersed plant with stems up to 8 feet long, branching more heavily near the top. Leaves are small, slender, strap shaped, pointed, serrated, and can be arranged in several ways along the stem.

Parrot feather
Rooted with submersed and emergent leaves. Slim feather divided leaves in whorls of 4-6. Emergent leaves are bright green and waxy. Submerged leaves are brown and limp. Small white flowers grow near the stem of emerging leaves.

Fanwort
Rooted with both submersed and floating green to red leaves. Submersed leaves arranged in opposite pairs and branched resembling small fans with handles. Floating leaves are oval and arranged alternately along the stem. Floating leaves develop small, white, six-petal flowers. Can fragment into large drifting mats.

Water chestnut
Rooted with submersed and floating leaves. Floating leaves are triangular fan shaped with toothy edges arranged in a rosette. Upper surface is glossy and the undersides covered with hairs. Spongy bladders along the stem and some long stems with feather-divided leaves. Small white flowers bloom above the rosettes on their own stalks. Woody, nut-like fruits with four sharp barbs dangle below the water.



European frog-bit
Free-floating kidney or heart shaped leaves occurring in clumps with elongated stalks producing unbranched root-like tendrils dangling below the surface. White flowers with a yellow center and three petals.

Yellow floating heart

Rooted stalks with branches supporting a group of floating round or heart shaped leaves. Leaves have wavy, scalloped edges and purple undersides. Emergent stalks hold 1-5 bright yellow flowers with five petals.