

## What is an Invasive Species?

An "invasive species" is defined as a species that is

- 1) Non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration *and*
- 2) Whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Invasive species can be plants, animals, and other organisms (e.g., microbes). Human actions are the **primary** means of invasive species introductions

[www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov)

## EURASIAN MILFOIL

**Scientific name:** *Myriophyllum spicatum* L.

As stems of Eurasian water milfoil near the water surface, they branch profusely and often form a dense canopy that reduces light availability for "understory" species. *Myriophyllum spicatum* dies back to propagating root crowns during the winter months. Spread of Eurasian water milfoil is primarily by asexual means. Long range dispersal is primarily by fragmentation that results from mechanical breakage or auto fragmentation which occurs after flowering and at the end of the growing season. Fragments produced by either method may be transported over long distances by water currents. Fragments may also be transported from one water body to another when fragments become attached to boat trailers. Once established, individual plants may expand for distances of a few meters by the production of stolons. Although Eurasian water milfoil produces large quantities of viable seed, very few seedlings have been observed in field situations, and seed are considered to be of minor importance in dispersal of Eurasian water milfoil. Eurasian water milfoil may "shade out" and out-compete desirable native species and form monospecific colonies over large areas of some water bodies. Dense mats and colonies of *M. spicatum* can restrict swimming, boating, bank fishing, and negatively impact aesthetic appeal. Fragments and floating mats may clog water intakes at power generation facilities and potable water intakes. Dense stands of Eurasian water milfoil provide habitat for mosquitoes and may increase populations of some species of mosquitoes . - Aquatic Nuisance Task Force (<http://anstaskforce.gov/default.php>)

According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, one plant can multiply into 250 million new plants in one year. Wind, waves and recreational activities such as boating fragment the weed.

Milfoil infestations almost always occur first in public boat ramps. Boats, trailers, motors, propellers and anchors are the most common carriers of this nuisance weed. It only takes one boat carrying a single milfoil fragment to begin a new colony in another river or lake.

Eurasian milfoil is most easily confused with native northern milfoil. When trying to identify milfoil. You need to check several characteristics before deciding a plant is the Eurasian variety. The best time to identify milfoil is after mid-June. The best place to locate milfoil is in shallow water less than 20 feet deep.

Distinguishing features:

- Each milfoil leaf is made up of pairs of small leaflets. A Eurasian leaf has 12 to 24 pairs of leaflets; a native leaf has only 6 to 9 pairs.
- The upper portion of the Eurasian plant often develops a reddish color.
- Eurasian milfoil has a finer, fuller and more feathery appearance.
- Eurasian's leaves collapse around the stem when removed from the water; the native is more upright.

Aside from herbicide treatments to control milfoil, other methods are successful - including harvest, hand pulling (try to contain fragments), rotovating (underwater tilling), installation of bottom barriers and diver harvesting or pulling. -River Talk, publication

<http://www.spokaneriver.com/archives/rivertalk/1998/1998V4I3C.htm>