

NORTHERN WATER-MILFOIL

Myriophyllum sibiricum

Description: Northern water-milfoil has two distinct leaf types: submersed leaves and emergent leaves associated with the flowers (called bracts). The submersed leaves are finely feather-divided (1 to 5 cm long), with 5 to 14 pairs of leaflet pairs per leaf. Whorls of 4 or 5 leaves are spaced (up to 1 cm apart) along the stem. Northern milfoil produces flowers and fruits above or at the water's surface on erect (4 to 15 cm) spikes. The bracts have entire or slightly serrated margins. Even when fully developed, the flowers are very small. The bracts are the same length or slightly longer than the flowers and fruits. (A hand lens is helpful for studying the flowers and bracts.) Toward the end of the growing season, egg-shaped winter buds (or turions) comprised of small stiff leaves are formed along the submersed stems.



Flowers and bracts arranged in whorls on emergent spike

Look Alikes: The native milfoil that northern water-milfoil most closely resembles is whorled water-milfoil. Northern milfoil may also be confused with two of the invasive milfoils: variable water-milfoil and Eurasian water-milfoil. Northern water-milfoil is the closest native look alike to Eurasian water-milfoil and has been known to hybridize with this invader.



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Northern water-milfoil

