

VARIABLE WATER-MILFOIL

Myriophyllum heterophyllum

NOT NATIVE TO MAINE - INVASIVE

NOTE: All leafy milfoils display a wide range of vegetative variability. Any milfoil found in Maine waters should be considered "suspicious" until a positive identification has been confirmed by someone with the appropriate expertise.

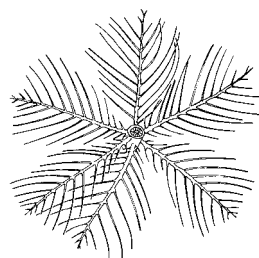
Habitat: Variable water-milfoil is an extremely well adapted plant, able to thrive in a wide variety of environmental conditions. It grows well in still and flowing waters, and can survive under ice. Variable water-milfoil grows rooted in water depths from 1 to 5 meters on various substrates including organic muck, silt, sand and gravel. Plants stranded on dewatered shorelines form erect spikes known as "terrestrial morphs." The morphs, resembling miniature pine trees, will remain in this land-adapted form until the waters return, at which time they will "morph" back into submersed aquatic plants.



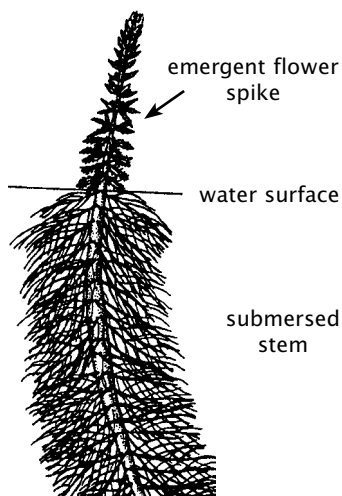
Terrestrial morphs

Description: Variable water-milfoil is a submersed, aquatic plant with branching stems emerging from dense, spreading roots. Feather-divided leaves are arranged in densely packed whorls. (Leaves along lower portions of the stem

may not be in perfect whorls, i.e., some leaves may be slightly offset.) There are generally 4 to 6 leaves per whorl and



Stem cross-section showing whorl of 6 leaves



Variable water-milfoil
(*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*)

5 to 14 pairs of thread-like leaflets on each leaf. The dense leaf arrangement gives this plant a bottle brush appearance. Stems may be green and slight, but most often they are thick, robust and reddish in color (even bright red). Flowers and bracts are arranged in whorls on an emergent flower spike. The tiny white flowers occur in the axils of the bracts. The bracts are blade-shaped, serrated, and more than twice the length of the flower. Winter buds (or turions) are formed in the fall at the base of the stems or on the rhizomes.

