

Eurasian water milfoil

Identification:

The Eurasian milfoil is an aquatic plant, not an alga, that can grow anywhere from 1m to 10m deep in clear waters. Its main feature is the green or purplish inflorescence in tight clusters erected above the water surface that is often called a cob, giving it its French name. Its green leaves with characteristic bearing forms in groups of 3 or 4 are also recognizable. The stems are long, seeking the surface and then floating on top when they reach. The leaves are separate in many subsections, or segments, for 20 to 42 per mature leaf.

Similar species:

There are many similar plants, often found in smaller lake not as frequented by boats. Those species include the Siberian and Alternate water milfoil that are different by the fact that their leaves are composed of less segments (8-15 opposed to 20-42 for the Eurasian). The Hornwort are also similar, but they have more leaves per group, up to 11, giving it a bulkier look.



Photo : RAPPEL

Nuisance

This plant grows dense immensely fast and can take over entire lakes in a few years. Their colony are so dense, most species cannot grow near them and many fishes do not use these plants as food source or spawning site. It is also said that they emit toxins that affect micro-algae. They can also get stock in small boat's engines, potentially causing damages. In addition, it can be very unpleasant to swim in water densely occupied by this plant. Studies have show that houses facing an invaded lake can see their value drop by 13 % in average because of those effects.

Why is an invasive species a problem?

All invasive species reproduce quickly, have no local predators, pose a threat to local plants living in similar conditions, and their elimination is almost impossible. Therefore, we must do everything in our power to prevent their spread. Report them on Sentinelle, the provincial website.



Prepared by
Le Canton de Stanstead

What to do?

Fraction of this plant can stick to boat easily, when entering or exiting a lake or other waterway, you should always wash your boat. If you see a colony on your property or in a public place, contact the municipality by email at stagiaire@cantonstanstead.ca , or phone at (819) 876-2948, ext. 227. If you want to remove them, be sure not to leave any part behind as it will regrow from every piece left. It is also possible to apply a weighted geotextile fabric directly to the bottom of the lake to prevent their growth, but this measure is complex, expensive, and harms all plant species and many benthic animals. Consulting the municipality before undertaking any work in this sense near the shore or even directly in the water is essential. Permits will surely be required. If you remove some pieces or entire plants, put them in a dry place, then in the brown bin: this plant will not spread in the compost facility.



Photo : RAPPEL