

## Together, we can keep our Blue Spaces healthy.

Our ability to enjoy our lakes and ponds is threatened by invasive and nuisance plant species. You can help reduce their spreading.

**Prevent hitchhikers.** Before launching your boat in a new lake, check it for weeds and debris. Remove any that you find. Clean debris from boots and pets before entering a new waterway.



*Fish owners, do not empty aquarium tanks into lakes or storm drains. Small aquatic plants and fish in your tanks can become big problems in our waterways.*

**Don't feed them.** Plants need nutrients to grow. Use less fertilizer or fertilizers low in phosphorous to reduce nutrient runoff into lakes and ponds. Pick up after your dog and don't feed geese, as their waste is also high in these nutrients.

**Join** a weed harvesting effort or donate to a watershed group.

Learn more at <http://www.worcesterma.gov/dpw>

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Department of Public Works and Parks  
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City of Worcester



## DPW & Parks Guide on Nuisance and Invasive Aquatic Plants



Macrophyte threats to our Blue Spaces, and what you can do to help.

## Why is a Plant Invasive or a Nuisance?

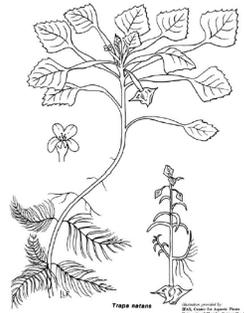
An invasive plant is a plant that is not native, or did not originally come from the area. These plants become nuisances because their natural constraints, such as predators or environmental limitations, do not exist in their new home, allowing them to multiply at a rate much faster than normal.

When aquatic plants, also called *macrophytes*, become too numerous, they can reduce our ability to enjoy our precious blue spaces, our lakes and ponds. Thick mats of macrophytes can clog boat propellers, reduce fish populations, and overtake swimming areas. They can drive down real estate values by reducing the aesthetics of a waterbody.

Macrophytes can be bad for the ecosystem, too! By crowding out other species, these plants can reduce biodiversity in a lake.

Invasive aquatic plants can arrive by many means. Some hitch rides on boats, pets, or boots to get from place to place. Others are released with good intentions as a beautiful addition to a landscape. Whatever the case, these plants have posed a problem to Worcester's blue spaces.

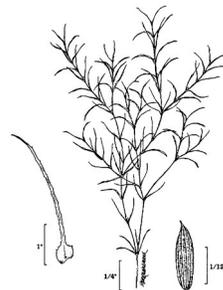
## Which Plants are a Nuisance in Worcester?



**Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*).** Waxy leaves have white flowers and form dense mats at the water's surface. This plant drops a sharp nut onto the lake bottom that can survive for up to 20 years, even if exposed to freezing conditions. This plant has multiplied rapidly in Coes Reservoir.



**Eurasian Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*).** Milfoil has long, slender, submerged stems that can form dense mats that inhibit recreation and crowd out fish and other plant populations. It is found on almost every continent.



**The European Naiad (*Najas minor*).** The Naiad is another submerged plant that grows in branched clusters from a long stem. Its seeds may be unaffected by herbicides. It has been a recent problem in Indian Lake.

These are just several of a variety of aquatic plants that threaten our waters. For more information, visit <http://www.worcesterma.gov/dpw>

## What is Worcester doing about it?

**Lake Drawdowns.** Exposing the ground where plants take root during the cold winter months has been effective in controlling some species of invasive plants.



Both Coes Reservoir and Indian Lake have annual winter drawdowns to control aquatic weeds.

**Mechanical and manual harvesting.** For some species of weeds, the best way to ensure that it won't come back is to remove it from the root and prevent new seeds from falling.



We employ mechanical harvesting in combination with hand-pulling at Coes Reservoir to combat Water Chestnut.