

## Submergent Plants



Coontail

Source: UW Herbarium Website

*Ceratophyllum demersum* (Coontail) is one of the most widely distributed aquatic plants within Wisconsin. The plant lacks true roots and can be found in water up to 16 feet deep. The leaves are arranged in a whorled fashion and are stiff and located closer together at the tip of the plant, giving it the appearance of a raccoon tail. Coontail is excellent habitat for invertebrates, especially in the winter when most other plants have died. The plant itself is food for waterfowl and provides shelter and foraging opportunities for fish (Borman, et al., 1997). Coontail may be mistaken for EWM.

*Chara, sp.* (Muskgrass / Chara) looks like a vascular plant; it actually is a multi-celled algae (macroalgae). Muskgrass is usually found in hard waters and prefers muddy or sandy substrate and can often be found in deeper water than other submergent plants. Muskgrass beds provide valuable habitat for small fish and invertebrates. Muskgrass is also a favorite waterfowl food. Its rhizoids slow the movement and suspension of sediments and benefit water quality in the ability to stabilize the lake bottom (Borman, et al., 1997). It can easily be identified by its characteristic "musty" odor.



Chara sp.

Source: UW Herbarium Website



Eurasian watermilfoil

Source: UW Herbarium Website

*Myriophyllum spicatum* (Eurasian watermilfoil or EWM) is a submersed aquatic plant native to Europe, Asia and northern Africa. It was introduced to the United States by early European settlers. EWM was first detected in Wisconsin lakes during the 1960's. In the past three decades, this AIS has significantly expanded its range to about 61 of Wisconsin's 72 counties and continues to infest new water bodies every year. Because of its potential for explosive growth and its incredible ability to regenerate, EWM can successfully out-compete most native aquatic plants, especially in disturbed areas.

*Potamogeton gramineus* (Variable Pondweed) is usually found in more firm sediment in water that is about 3 feet deep. Variable pondweed overwinters by hardy rhizomes and winter buds. Flowering usually occurs early in the growing season and fruit is produced during mid summer. The fruits and tubers are grazed by waterfowl and the extensive network of leafy branches offers invertebrate habitat and foraging opportunities for fish (Borman, et al., 1997).



Variable Pondweed

Source: UW Herbarium Website



**Illinois Pondweed**  
Source: University of Florida Website

*Potamogeton illinoensis* (Illinois Pondweed) has stout stems that emerge from thick rhizomes. Most of the submersed leaves are lance-shaped to oval and either attach directly to the stem or have a short stalk. The leaves often have a sharp, needle like tip. Floating leaves which have a thick stalk and ellipse shaped blade are sometimes produced. Illinois pondweed is usually found in water with moderate to high pH and fairly good water clarity. The fruit produced by Illinois pondweed can be locally important to ducks and geese. The plant may also be grazed by muskrat, deer and beaver. This pondweed also offers excellent shade and cover for fish and good surface area for invertebrates.

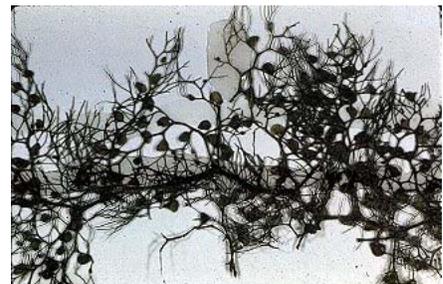
*Potamogeton crispus* (Curly leaf pondweed) spreads through burr-like winter buds (turions), which are moved among waterways. These plants can also reproduce by seed, but this plays a relatively small role compared to the vegetative reproduction through turions. New plants form under the ice in winter, making CLP one of the first nuisance aquatic plants to emerge in the spring. The leaves of curly-leaf pondweed are reddish-green, oblong, and about 3 inches long, with distinct wavy edges that are finely toothed. The stem of the plant is flat, reddish-brown and grows from 1 to 3 feet long. The plant usually drops to the lake bottom by early July (WDNR website, 2006).



**White-stem Pondweed**  
Source: UW Herbarium Website

*Potamogeton praelongus* (White-stem Pondweed) has zigzag stems. Submersed leaves are lance to oval shaped and clasp the stem. The leaves have strong veins and the tip of the leaf is boat-shaped and splits when pressed, creating a notch at the end of the leaf. White stem pondweed is usually found in soft sediment in water ranging from 1-4 meters deep and found in lakes with good water clarity. Fruit of white pondweed provides a valuable razing opportunity for ducks and geese. White stem pondweed is considered a good food producer and valuable habitat for muskellunge.

*Utricularia vulgaris* (Common bladderwort) has floating stems that can reach 2-3 meters in length. Along the stem are leaf-like branches. On these branches are the bladders that trap prey. The branches also have fine spines (spicules) scattered along their margins. Yellow, two-lipped flowers are produced on stalks that protrude above the water surface. Common bladderwort is free-floating and can be found in water ranging from a few inches to several metes deep. The trailing stems of common bladderwort provide food and cover for fish. Because they are free-floating, they can grow in areas of very loosely consolidated sediment. This provides needed fish habitat in areas that are not readily colonized by rooted plants (Borman, et al., 1997).



**Common bladderwort**  
Source: UW-Herbarium Website

## Emergent Plants



*Sagittaria latifolia*. (common arrowhead) is an emergent plant that usually produces leaves that are true to its name – shaped like an arrowhead. The size and shape of the leaf is highly variable with blades that range from a slender “A” shape to a broad wedge. Arrowhead is found in the shallow water of lakes, ponds, streams and marshes and usually found in water only ankle-deep, but will sometimes grow in water about 1 meter deep. Arrowhead is one of the highest value aquatic plants for wildlife and waterfowl depend on the high-energy tubers during migration. The seeds are also consumed by a wide variety of ducks, geese, marsh birds and shore birds. (Borman, et al., 1997).

**Sagittaria spp.**

Source: UW Herbarium website