



## **Eurasian Watermilfoil**

*Myriophyllum spicatum*

### **History**

- \* Introduced to the United States in the 1940s

### **Characteristics**

- \* Rooted, submersed, perennial, aquatic plant
- \* Narrow, whitish stems grow to the water surface, extending 3-10 ft (1-3 m) or longer
- \* Forms dense beds
- \* Feather-like leaves with blunt ends commonly with 12 to 24 pairs of leaflets on each leaf
- \* Leaves are grouped in whorls of 3 - 6 leaves around stem
- \* Small flowers project 2-4 in (5-10 cm) above the water surface

### **Habitat**

- \* Lakes, ponds, slow-moving streams, reservoirs, and estuaries
- \* Depths greater than 3 ft (0.9 m)
- \* Tolerates brackish water
- \* Thrives in highly disturbed lake beds, lakes receiving nitrogen and phosphorus-laden runoff, and heavily used lakes

### **Known Distribution**

- \* Quebec and most of the U.S.
- \* Native to Europe and Asia

### **Impacts**

- \* Highly aggressive, nuisance species
- \* Can form dense mats that shade and crowd out native plants
- \* Degrades habitats used by fish for spawning and feeding
- \* Thick growth can impair recreational uses of waterways including boating, swimming, and fishing
- \* Yellow-green, matted vegetation on milfoil-dominated lakes creates perception that lake is "infested" or "dead";
- \* Control efforts cost millions of dollars annually; \$500,000 per year in New York state alone

