

EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL

Myriophyllum spicatum



Aquatic Invasive Species: Control and Prevention

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) impede recreation, degrade water quality, and, once established, are very difficult to control. There currently are invasive plants, invertebrates, mollusks, and fish in Lake Tahoe. Partner organizations around the lake have been implementing preventative measures to ensure that additional AIS are not introduced. Species of the highest concern that are not currently present in the Tahoe Basin include Zebra mussels, Quagga mussels, and New Zealand mudsnails. A diverse group of partner agencies, including the TahoeRCD, University of Nevada-Reno, University of California-Davis, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, have collaborated and are dedicated to preventing, monitoring, and controlling AIS in Lake Tahoe.

How did Eurasian water-milfoil get here?

Eurasian water-milfoil is thought to have been intentionally introduced and is one of the most widely distributed of all non-indigenous plants in the United States. Long distance travel of Eurasian water-milfoil is likely a result of the aquarium trade. Motorboats lead to the spread of Eurasian water-milfoil by breaking off plant fragments, thereby aiding in the spread and reproduction.

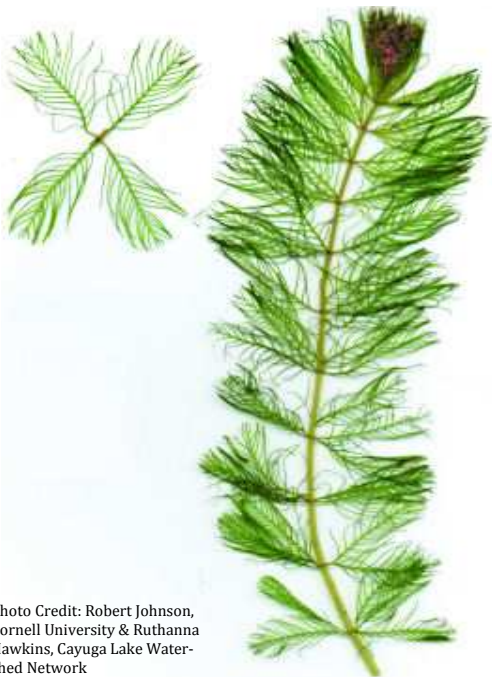


Photo Credit: Robert Johnson, Cornell University & Ruthanna Hawkins, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

Origin: Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa

Means of Introduction: Transportation by boating equipment, aquarium dumping

Habitat: Lakes, ponds, shallow reservoirs

Spread: Plant fragments (vegetative propagules) and seeds

Depth: Typically grows in 1 to 4 meters of water

Characteristics: Submersed, perennial herb

Leaves: Feathery foliage, threadlike leaflets usually found in pairs of more than 14

Stems: Long underwater stems

Why is it a threat to the Tahoe Basin?

- ⊗ Competes to displace diversity and abundance of native plants
- ⊗ Growth of thick mats of vegetation degrades water quality and decreases dissolved oxygen levels
- ⊗ Restricts and impedes recreational activities

Current Management

In order to prevent the further spread of invasive plants, a variety of monitoring and management techniques are being utilized in Lake Tahoe.

Bottom Barriers: Large sheet-like barriers placed on the bottom of the lake to prevent plants from receiving sunlight

Hand Pulling: Physical pulling of plants to eliminate localized communities

Mechanical Dredging: Site-specific dredging in order to decrease plant mass

