

What is the EAPW?

The Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch Program (EAPW) is part of the MiCorps Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP). Volunteers learn how to detect, monitor, and respond to invasive aquatic plants in lakes. Early detection and rapid response is critical to preventing damaging invasions.

How do I enroll in the EAPW?

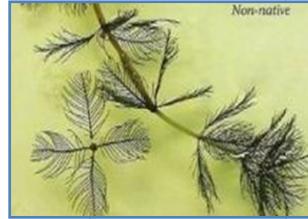
Contact: Jean Roth
Michigan Lakes and Streams Association
Phone: 989-257-3715
jroth@mlswa.org

Or visit
www.micorps.net



Volunteers from Murray Lake (Kent Co.) receive one-on-one assistance from CLMP staff in identifying their lake's aquatic plants.

Have you seen these EXOTIC plants in *your* lake?



Eurasian milfoil has four leaves arranged in a whorl around the stem. Each leaf is divided into leaflets and Eurasian milfoil will have more than 12 leaflets while native milfoils will have 12 or less.



Starry stonewort is a large alga with a multi-branched disheveled appearance. During the warm months, it produces white star-shaped reproductive structures called bulbils.



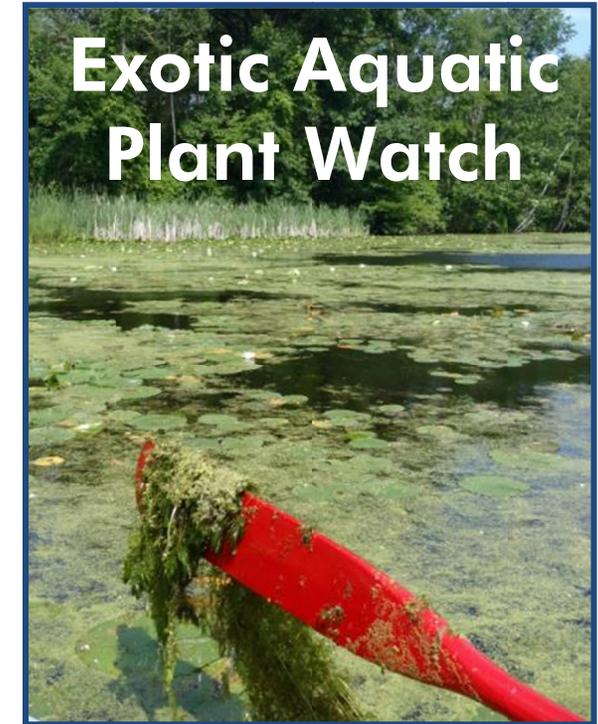
Curly-leaf pondweed is the only pondweed with wavy, crinkled leaves with fine-toothed edges.



Hydrilla is a rapidly growing submersed aquatic plant with small leaves (1/2 to 3/4 inches long) occurring in whorls of 4-8 around the stem. Hydrilla leaves have finely toothed margins.

If you see any of the above exotics, contact:

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Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch

Are invasive plants threatening your lake?



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Why should you monitor your lake?

The Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch (EAPW) provides lake communities with a strategy for monitoring troublesome exotic (also called invasive, non-native) aquatic plants. If detected early, management strategies reduce the probability that an exotic infestation will cause significant disruptions to the lake ecosystem and recreation. Monitoring is recommended even if a professional plant management company has been hired. Independent monitoring will help the community verify the success of plant management efforts and identify future needs.

“Volunteering DOES matter...monitoring and inspection can prevent the green carpet!”

- Volunteer Martha,

Sweezy Lake (Jackson Co.)

Aren't plants good for a lake?

Rooted aquatic plants are a natural and essential part of the lake, just as grasses, shrubs and trees are a natural part of the land. However, sometimes a lake is invaded by an aquatic plant species that is not native to Michigan. Some of these exotic aquatic plants, like Eurasian milfoil, can be extremely disruptive to a lake's ecosystem. These exotic plants can “take over” a lake by crowding out and competing with the beneficial native species. An overabundance of an exotic species can negatively affect fish populations and human recreation.



“It feels good to help the lake by being a volunteer.”
- Volunteer Lori, Eagle Lake (Cass Co.)

Steps for using EAPW in your lake

1. Monitoring

The critical step in stopping the spread of exotic plants is to find them before they spread out across the lake. Through the EAPW, a plant expert from MiCorps teaches volunteers how to survey their lake for exotic plants and how to identify them.



2. Early Detection

Finding the first colonies of an exotic plant invasion will permit a rapid response to control the plant in small areas before it can spread. An undetected invasion can cover large areas of the lake in just a few years.

3. Rapid Response

Responding rapidly to a new invasion of an exotic plant will increase the chances of keeping the plant under control, or possibly even eradicating it. Treating small infested areas will be less expensive and more effective than treating large areas after the plant has spread.

4. Maintenance Control

Continually monitoring and treating the exotic plant is time consuming and requires persistence and dedication, but it can keep the plant's population at low, manageable levels. The alternative is to “give up” and let the exotic plant populations expand to cover large areas of the lake, after which control will be very expensive.

5. Preventive Management

Even if the first year's survey does not reveal the presence of exotic plants, the lake community should continue monitoring. Parks and boat ramps are common points of entry for new exotic species. Educating lake users to “Clean, Drain, and Dry” boats and equipment before and after launching, and promoting a healthy native plant community, are the best ways to prevent a damaging invasion by exotic aquatic plants.

