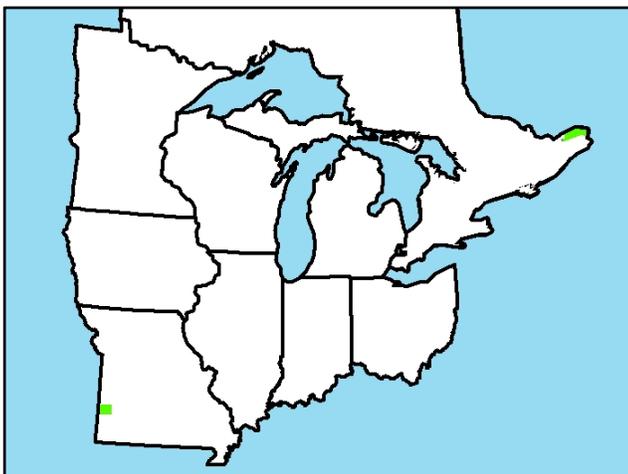


# WATER CHESTNUT

## *Trapa natans*

**Description:** Water chestnut is a rooted, floating annual with stems that grow up to 16 feet long. Floating leaves form in rosettes, are triangular, 1-2 inches long, waxy, and have toothed edges. The leaf stems (petioles) have a bladder-like swelling. Submerged leaves are feathery, whorled, and grow up to 6 inches long. Small, white, 4-petaled flowers give way to a nut-like fruit. Fruit is 1 inch wide and has 4 sharp, barbed spines.



Current Midwest Distribution, including Ontario

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Not Known        | Isolated   |
| Locally Abundant | Widespread |

**Ecological threat:** Water chestnut invades freshwater bodies. It forms dense, floating mats that displace native aquatic vegetation. These mats also reduce light penetration and oxygen levels, degrading water conditions for other aquatic life. Floating mats impede boating, fishing, and other recreational water use. Water chestnut spreads by seed and plant fragments. Seeds can remain viable for up to 12 years.

**Native Range:** Eurasia

**Current North American Range:** Present throughout New England. Water chestnut has isolated populations in Missouri and Ontario.

Water chestnut is **prohibited** in Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

For information on **aquatic plant management**, see [http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ws/ws\\_21.pdf](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ws/ws_21.pdf).

Photo credits: Left & top right - Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org; Bottom right - Vic Ramey, University of Florida/IFAS

**Early detection and rapid response can help stop the spread!**