

What You Can Do To Prevent Culver Lake From Becoming Infested with Water Chestnut

Water chestnut is a very aggressive growing plant that has made its way into the lakes of New Jersey. It grows especially well in relatively shallow lakes such as Culver Lake. It is spread quite often by boaters. You can prevent the infestation of the lake by learning more about the plant itself and by following the recommendations presented within this flier.

What Does a Water Chestnut Look Like?

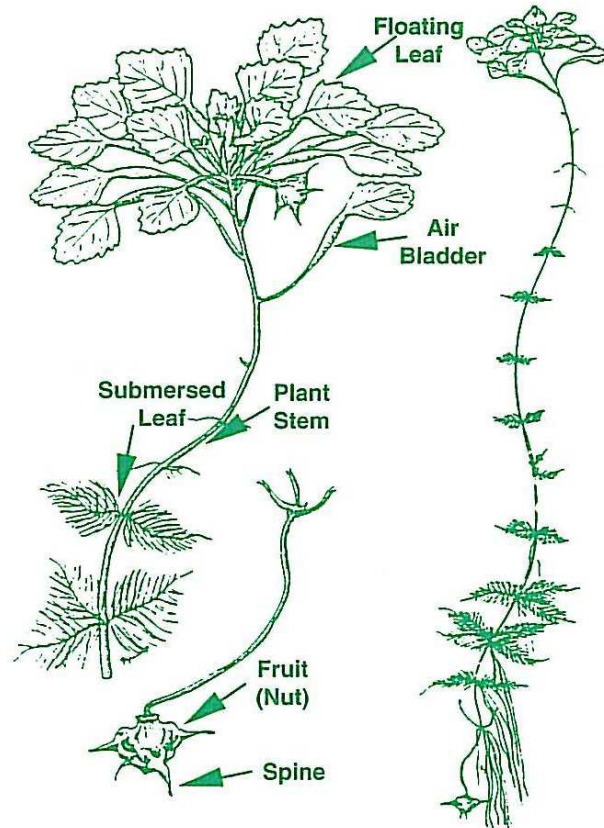
Fruit & Seed: Has four sharp spines. An individual seed can give rise to 10-15 rosettes, each of which can produce 15-20 seeds. Thus one seed can produce 300 new seeds in a single year.

Flowers: Four white petals up to ¼ inch long, blooming from late June to September.

Leaves: Submersed leaves are feathery like and oppositely paired along the stem. Floating leaves are triangular in shape, forming a rosette on the water surface.

Air Bladder: Connected to the floating leaves. Bladder filled with air.

The leaves of water chestnut form a rosette that grows to the surface of the water in late June. As the plant develops, additional rosettes grow from the main plant. These can break off and float away further spreading this aquatic nuisance.



Aquatic Plants of New England Series: Trapa natans L., Crow and Hellquist 1983. Illustration by Pam Bruns

Why Be Concerned?

- ◆ **Loss of wildlife habitat and native aquatic species.**

Mats of water chestnut can become so dense that they shade out the native vegetation preferred by fish and waterfowl.

- ◆ **Loss of recreational opportunities.**

The water chestnut frequently forms dense, impenetrable mats that make swimming, boating, fishing and other recreational activities nearly impossible.

- ◆ **Ouch!**

The water chestnut produces sharp, thorny nutlets that wash up on shore and are painful to step on. Mature nuts can remain viable for 8-12 years.



- ◆ **Decrease in waterfront property values.**

Homeowners pay a premium for waterfront properties in order to swim, boat and fish. When access to these activities is limited by the water chestnut, the value of the property is decreased.

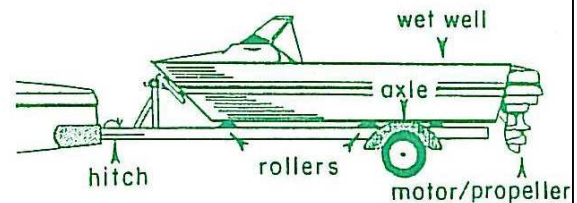
How Can I Help?

- ✓ **Get Involved! Pull together with hand pulling.**

The roots of the water chestnut are very shallow; so hand pulling is easy and effective in control. Pull them yourself and encourage your neighbor to do the same.

- ✓ **Remove all plants and plant fragments.**

Fragments of plant cling to the propellers of boats to boat trailers and other recreational equipment.



- ✓ **Proper disposal.**

Dispose of the plant in the trash, composting off shore or burn them.

- ✓ **Spread the word not the plant.**

Encourage people not to pick attractive plants and carry them to other areas. Learn to identify Water Chestnut and other aquatic plants and share this material with others.

For more information please contact:

The deep waters of Culver Lake should be free of this weed. The more susceptible areas are the shallow areas - between 10 and 15 feet deep.