

# EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL

(*Myriophyllum spicatum*)

Oneida Lake Status:  
Common



Tall, dense stand of watermilfoil



*Acentria* larva (top) and moth (bottom)  
US Army Corps of Engineers

Prepared by:

**Kristen Holeck and Ed Mills**  
Cornell Biological Field Station

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- Present in Oneida Lake since the mid 1900s
- Plant fragments regenerate into new plants
- Natural predator is the *Acentria* moth

Eurasian watermilfoil is a nuisance aquatic plant in many New York lakes and was first recorded in the Great Lakes basin near Oswego in 1882. Exactly how and when it reached Oneida Lake is unknown. The plants may have been spread throughout the Central New York region by recreational boats or release from aquaria.

Eurasian watermilfoil is a submersed plant with slender stems that can grow over 10 feet long. When present in shallower waters, excess stem length floats along the surface creating a canopy that can shade out native vegetation.

Cutting is not a preferred control method because small pieces can regenerate into new plants. This plant has not reached nuisance levels in Oneida Lake which could be due in part to the presence of a natural predator—the aquatic moth *Acentria ephemerella*. These tiny white moths are less than ½ inch long and live for only 1 or 2 days. During the larval stage of its life cycle, this moth feeds on the growing tip of milfoil stems, helping to keep populations of the plant in check.



Close up view of watermilfoil  
Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board



Watermilfoil is often spread from lake to lake by transport of plants or plant fragments on boats and boat trailers