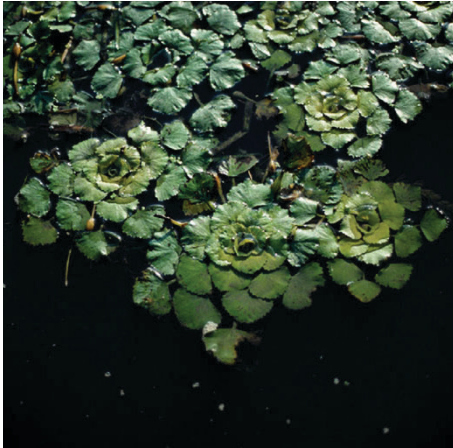


ALERT: AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

European Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*)



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REASON FOR ALERT:

European water chestnut was found for sale on virtual market platforms in Alberta. Since 2015, European water chestnut has been a prohibited species under the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act*. It is illegal to possess, release, sell or transport this species within Alberta.

What's the threat?

European Water Chestnut:

- Forms large dense floating vegetation mats that shade and crowd out native aquatic plants
- Decreases oxygen levels in the water negatively impacting fish populations
- Creates hazardous entanglement for recreational activities, making it difficult to boat, fish or swim
- Has sharp fruits that may cause wounds if pressed upon skin

How is it spread and where is it found?

- Native to Europe, Asia and Africa – grows in any freshwater setting, but prefers nutrient-rich lakes and rivers.
- Typically introduced as an ornamental plant, spreads easily through seed dispersal or by plant fragmentation (broken stems).
- Was introduced into North America before 1879, populations can be found in Quebec and Ontario and across the Northeastern states.
- As of 2021, Alberta has no reports of European water chestnut in a waterbody.

Description

- Annual aquatic plant with submerged stems up to 5 metres long; stems has feather-like leaves and very fine roots for anchoring.
- Rosettes of saw-toothed triangular leaves float on the water
- Small flowers with four white petals bloom from July until frost
- Four-horned nuts with sharp barbed spines are produced underwater

How can you help?

- Learn how to identify European water chestnut and other aquatic invasive species.
- Report all sightings to the aquatic invasive species hotline at 1-855-336-BOAT (2628)
- Raise awareness to prevent the introduction of this species into Alberta
- Never possess, release, sell or transport this species in Alberta

If you have seen European water chestnut for sale or in Alberta waters, report it immediately to the Aquatic Invasive Species hotline

1-855-336-BOAT (2628)