

## Native Look-A-Likes

The following pages contain invasive species as well as native species that look alike. Distinguishing features will be pointed out to help aid in identification of native species vs invasive species.

The top three photos will be of the invasive species with the bottom three photos being the native species. The native species will also have the word **NATIVE** before it's name (i.e. **NATIVE** Cow Parsnip).



Photo by: Prairie Moon Nursery



Photo by: Eric Beckers, wildflower.org



Photo by: WI Wetlands Association

# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)



Photo by: Colne Valley Regional Park



Photo by: Minnesota DNR



Photo by: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Invasive giant hogweed can be identified by its leaves that can grow up to 5 feet wide, purple spots on the stem and a stem that is covered in coarse white hairs.

## NATIVE Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*)



Photo by: Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Prairie Moon Nursery



Photo by: Native Plant Trust

Native cow parsnip has leaves that can grow up to 18 inches wide and have **inflated stems at the leaf base** (last photo). The stem is covered in soft and shorter white hairs.

Do you think you found an invasive species? Contact us:  
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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Buckthorn (*Rhamnus sp.*)



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR

Invasive buckthorn's identifying features include the black berries that ripen in late summer (left photo) and the orange inner bark (middle photo). The outer bark is gray to brown with light, raised spots. This alone is not an identifying feature as there are native look-a-likes such as tag alder (below), plum trees, and cherry trees.

## NATIVE Tag / Speckled Alder (*Alnus incana*)

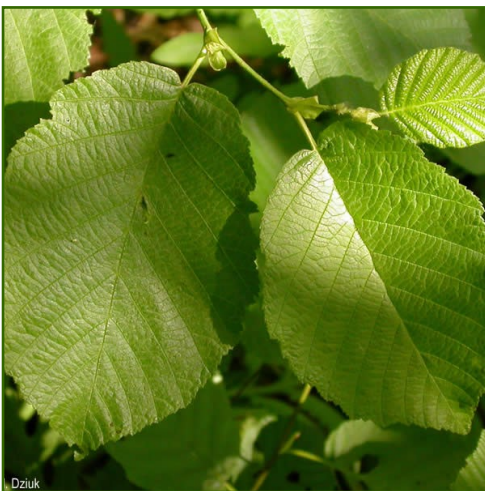


Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota

Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota

Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota

Wildflower

Native tag / speckled alder can be identified by its flower (middle photo) it produces instead of berries. This flower, also called a catkin, will stay on the tree into winter. The leaves of tag alder will have small hairs on the underside.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR



Photo by: University of Minnesota Extension

Invasive poison hemlock's identifying features include having pinnately compound leaves and a stem that has reddish-purple markings on it. Flowers are white, 5-petaled and form umbels 4 to 6 inches wide.

## NATIVE Common Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers

Native common elderberry has opposite leaves that form in groups. Flowers are white with 5 rounded petals and 5 cream colored stamens (first photo). Fruits are purple to black with flower stalks that turn red to purple.

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## NATIVE Water Hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*)



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflower

Native water hemlock has compound leaves with sharp teeth. The leaves appear to fold up from the midvein (second photo). The flowers are white, have 5 petals with 5 long stamens and a light green center.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers

Invasive wild parsnip's identifying features include having pinnately compound leaves with 5 to 15 oblong leaflets. **Stems have deep grooves (last photo).** Flowers are small, yellow and have 5 petals.

## NATIVE Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflower

Native golden alexander has compound leaves in groups of 2 or 3 with sharply toothed edges. The flowers are yellow with 5 petals that curve inward with 5 long yellow stamens. **The stem is not grooved.**

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Curly-leaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-Extension Lakes



Photo by: Frank Koshere, University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants



Invasive curly-leaf pondweed is identified by its serrated leaf edges (first photo) and wavy, lasagna noodle-like leaves. Curly-leaf pondweed forms hardened reproductive structures, called turions, which typically form in late spring to early summer (last photo).

## NATIVE Clasping-leaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton richardsonii*)



Photo by: Wikipedia



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflower

Native clasping-leaf pondweed has smooth leaf edges, which is the major identifier from the invasive curly-leaf pondweed (first photo). The leaves also partially wrap around the stem (second photo).

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)

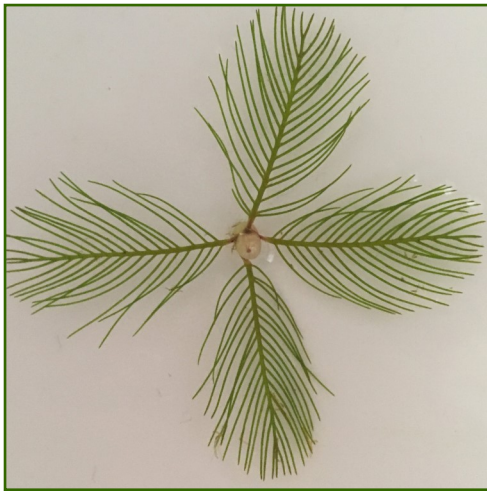


Photo by: University of Minnesota  
Extension



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes

Invasive Eurasian watermilfoil's identifying features includes having whorls of 4 leaves around the stem. Each leaf has **12 or more pairs of leaflets** per leaf. The stem is typically flexible, like a cooked spaghetti noodle.

## NATIVE Northern Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*)

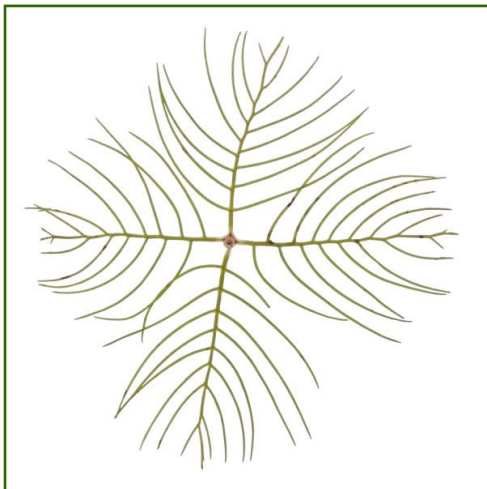


Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflower

Native northern watermilfoil has whorls of 4 leaves around the stem. Each leaf will have **less than 12 pairs of leaflets** per leaf (typically between 7-9 pairs of leaflets per leaf). Leaves and the stem are much more stiff and usually keep their shape out of water.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Freshwater Golden Clams (*Corbicula fluminea*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-Extension Lakes

Invasive freshwater golden clams can be identified by deep, distinct ridges on the outside of the shell. The shell is extremely strong and cannot be crushed with your fingers.

## NATIVE Fingernail Clams (*Pisidium moitessierianum*)



Photo by: EEK Wisconsin



Photo by: Montana Field Guide



Photo by: Missouri Department of Conservation

Native fingernail clams may have ridges, but they are much smaller than those of the invasive freshwater golden clam. Fingernail clams will easily be crushed by your fingers.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Non-native Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)



Photo by: UW Extension, Wisconsin Horticulture

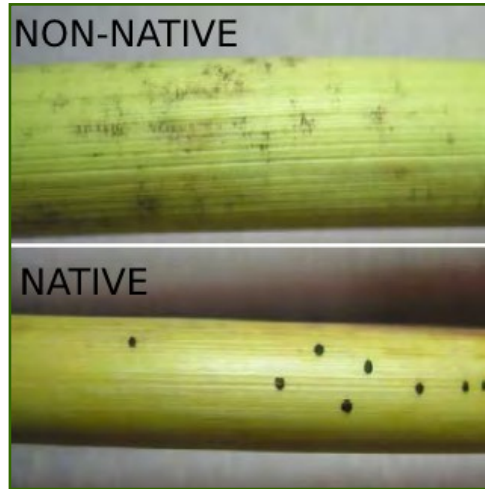


Photo by: Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative



Photo by: Wisconsin DNR

Invasive phragmites can be identified by having leaves that are blue-green in color. The stem will be all green, have ridges near the base, and lack fungal spots. The leaf sheaths will stay on the stem through winter.

## NATIVE Phragmites (*Phragmites americanus*)



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota Wildflower

Native phragmites has green to yellow-green leaves, has fungal spots on the stem, and leaf sheaths will fall off in fall and winter. The stem may also be purple (middle photo). The flower heads are typically smaller than the invasive phragmites.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Non-native Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) Vs. NATIVE Phragmites (*Phragmites americanus*)

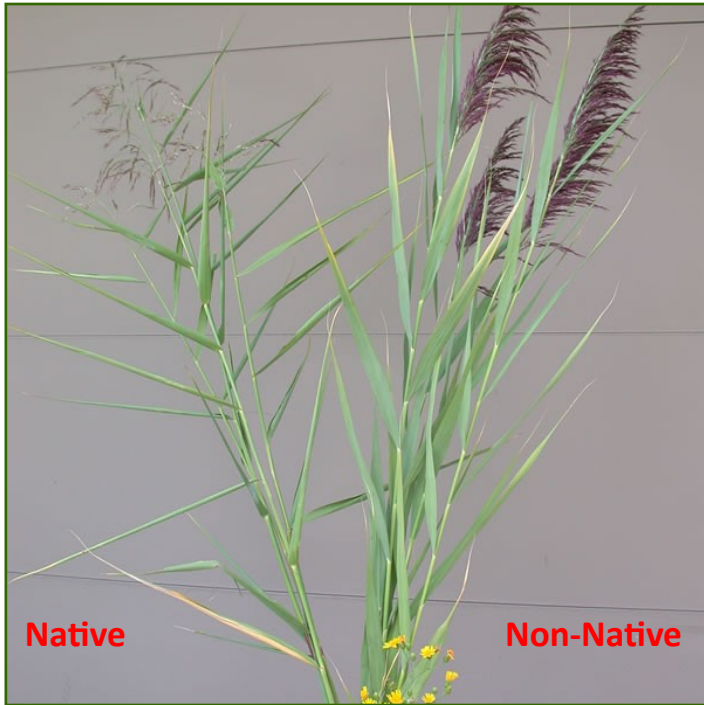


Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Minnesota DNR

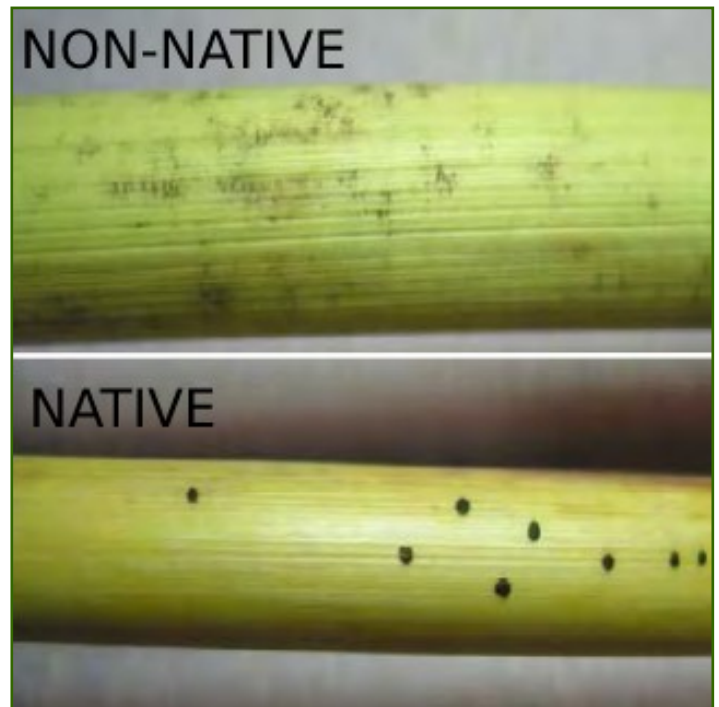


Photo by: Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes

Invasive purple loosestrife can be identified by its pink to purple flowers that have 6 petals and grow close to the flower stalk. **The stems have distinct edges and are typically square (4-sided).**

## NATIVE Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflower

Native fireweed has pink to purple flowers that have 4 petals and are held out from the flower stalk. Typically, fireweed will bloom in early summer where purple loosestrife blooms later in the summer, but they may have some overlap.

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Yellow Floating Heart (*Nymphoides peltata*)



Photo by: Lyn Gettys, University of Florida



Photo by: Vic Ramey, University of Florida



Photo by: Amanda Smit, Wisconsin DNR

Invasive yellow floating heart's identifying features include having floating leaves that are 1 to 4 inches long with wavy edges (middle photo). The flowers have 5 petals with fringed edges.

## NATIVE Spatterdock (*Nuphar variegata*)

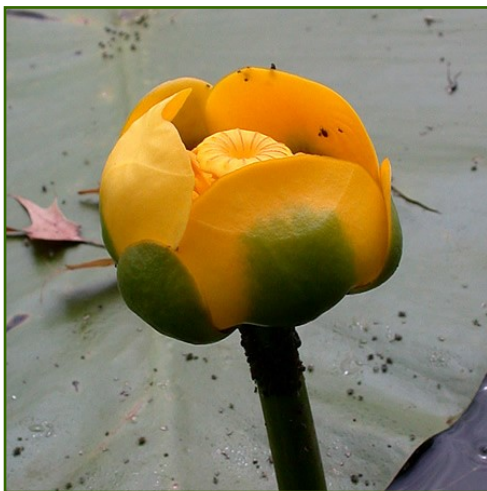


Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers

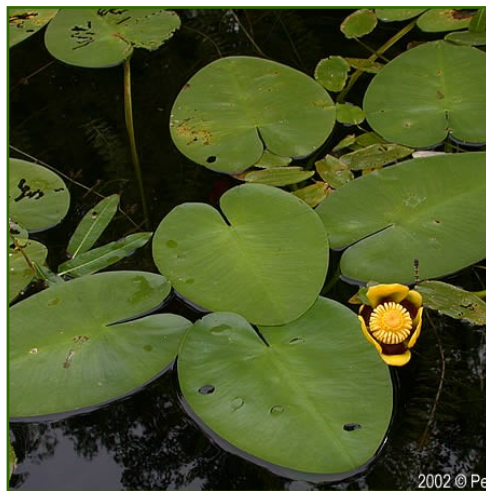


Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers

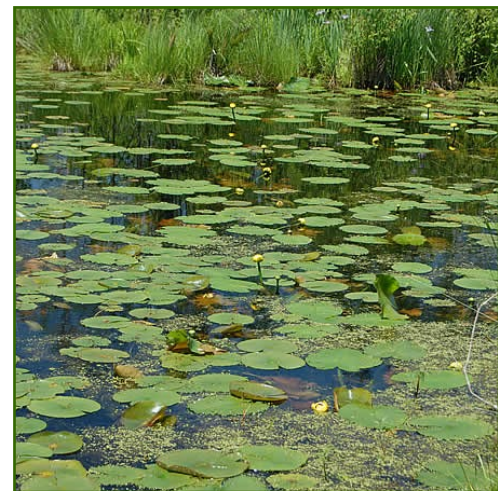


Photo by: Katy Chayka, Minnesota Wildflower

Native Spatterdock (also called bullhead pond lily) has floating leaves that can grow up to 15 inches long with smooth edges. The flower is yellow and cup-shaped.

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## Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: University of Florida, Center  
for Aquatic and Invasive Plants

Invasive hydrilla is identified by having 4 to 8 leaves in a whorl. Leaves have serrated edges and a midvein with spines on the under side of the leaf.

## NATIVE Common Waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: Christian Fischer,  
aquaticbiologists.com



Photo by: Oregon Flora

Native common waterweed has whorls of 3 leaves. Leaf edges are smooth.

# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Flowering Rush (*Butomus umellatus*)



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-Extension Lakes



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-Extension Lakes

Invasive flowering rush's identifying features include umbels of white to light pink flowers with 3 petals, 3 sepals and red anthers. **Flowering rush grows on a rhizome and has bulbils as reproductive structures (last photo).**

## NATIVE Common Bur-reed (*Sparganium eurycarpum*)



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers

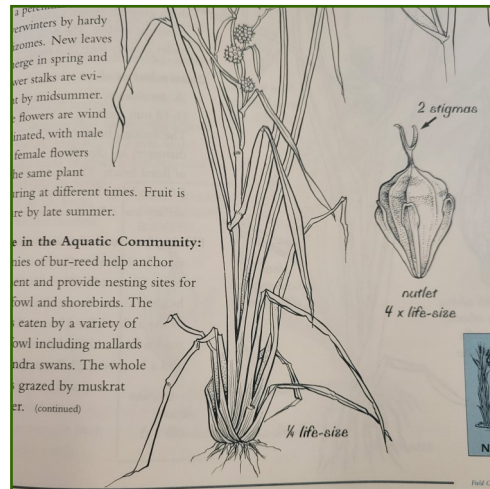


Photo by: Through The Looking Glass: Field Guide to Aquatic Plants

Native common bur-reed forms separate male and female flowers that are green and white (middle photo). Clusters of spiky fruits also form (first photo). The stems sheath around each other at the base (last photo).

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# INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEETS

## Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)



Photo by: University of Florida Center  
for Aquatic and Invasive Plants



Photo by: Paul Skawinski, UW-  
Extension Lakes



Photo by: Washington State Noxious  
Weed Control Board

Invasive yellow iris can be identified by its yellow flowers with 3 petals and 3 sepals. The leaves are typically blue-green in color and have a very prominent midvein.

## NATIVE Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*)



Photo by: Peter M. Dziuk, Minnesota  
Wildflowers



Photo by: Gardenia



Photo by: Wisconsin Wildflower

Native blue flag iris has purple to blue flowers with a yellow spot on the sepals. The leaves are green with a prominent midvein, but it is not as prominent as the invasive yellow iris' midvein.

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