



INVASIVE PLANT

Parrot's feather

Myriophyllum aquaticum

DECEMBER 2024



ABOUT

Parrot's feather is an introduced aquatic plant native to the Amazon River in South America.

DISTRIBUTION

This plant is currently present in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. It was first collected in North Vancouver in 1980 and then again in 2007 in Garry Point Park in Richmond. Other populations have now been found throughout the Fraser Valley and southern Vancouver Island.

LEGAL STATUS

None.

IDENTIFICATION

Flowers: Pinkish-white flowers, approximately 1.6 mm long.

Stems/Stalks: Submerged brownish stems create dense intertwined mats, while the green emergent stems grow over 1.5 m long.

Leaves: This plant has both submersed and emergent leaves. Submersed leaves are 1.5-3.5 cm long, have 20-30 divisions per leaf, are limp and often appear to be decaying.



The stiffer emergent leaves are bright green, 2-5 cm long and have 6-19 divisions per leaf. The emergent stem and leaves resemble small fir trees.

Fruits: None. There are no male plant parts found outside of South America — all North American plants reproduce asexually.

Similar Non-Native Species: Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) is often confused with Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*). Eurasian watermilfoil can be distinguished by its yellow flower and shorter petioles that are either <2 mm long or absent.

ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Habitat: Found in freshwater lakes, ponds, streams, and canals with low flow and high nutrient levels. The emergent stems can survive on wet banks of rivers and lake shores.

Reproduction: Rhizomatous perennial that exhibits vegetative reproduction in North America.

Dispersal: A popular aquatic garden plant that has spread by intentional plantings. Floating plant fragments are also dispersed from one water body to another by water currents, animals, boats/trailers and fishing gear.



IMPACTS

Economic: Impacts waterways, irrigation ditches, and drainage canals, where it has the potential to inhibit flow and increase maintenance costs.

Ecological: Has the ability to outcompete and replace native plant communities, reducing overall biological diversity and reducing water quality. Dense stands also result in stagnant waters which increases breeding grounds for mosquitoes. It can also interfere with flow of irrigation water, transport, hydroelectric power production and fisheries.

Social: Forms thick stands of tangled stems and vast mats of vegetation on the water's surface. These mats can limit recreational values, such as boating, swimming, and fishing. It can also detract from the aesthetic appeal of the shoreline resulting in decreased desirability of adjacent residential areas.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

IPM is a decision-making process that includes identification and inventory of invasive plant populations, assessment of the risks that they pose, development of well-informed control options that may include a number of methods, site treatments, and monitoring.

Prevention:

- ▶ Purchase alternative, non-invasive aquatic plants for aquariums and aquatic gardens.
- ▶ Minimize disturbance near infested areas.
- ▶ Remove any plant material from boats, anchors, trailers, fishing gear and other equipment before leaving the water body.

Mechanical Control:

- ▶ Although plants can be removed either by hand (raking and seining) or by mechanical harvesters and chopping machines, it is not recommended unless all plant fragments can be removed.
- ▶ Excavation and dredging has also shown to be effective for large infestations.

Biological Control: None available in British Columbia.

Chemical Control: None available in British Columbia.





REPORT

Report invasive species by using the mobile Report-Invasives-BC app for Apple and Android platforms, available for download at <https://bcinvasives.ca/take-action/report/>.

You can also report any invasive species through the ISCBC website, through info@bcinvasives.ca or at 1-888-933-3722.

REFERENCES/LINKS

E-Flora BC, Electronic Atlas of the Plants of BC. <https://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Myriophyllum%20aquaticum>

Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program. <http://www.invadingspecies.com/parrot-feather/>

Washington State Department of Ecology. Non-native Invasive Freshwater Plants: Parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*). www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/weeds/aqua003.html

ISCMV BMP. <https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/parrots-feather-best-management-practices.pdf>

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**Invasive Species
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ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFO