

ABOUT THE WATER CHESTNUT

Water Chestnut

(*trapa natans*) is a non-native floating aquatic plant that is rapidly spreading across our state and poses a serious threat to any water body where it can get established.



Why the threat?

The reason the plant is of such concern is because of its ability to take over an entire aquatic ecosystem, growing from a persistent seed—particularly in shallow, stagnant areas—to a stringy plant with large rosettes of two-inch arrowhead-shaped leaves. The rosettes can quickly multiply, and before long the water chestnut can take over the surface of an area, clogging up channels for recreation and choking out other aquatic life.

Early detection is key: One undetected plant can release up to 400 seeds, and from there, the water chestnut can grow exponentially.

How it is transported?

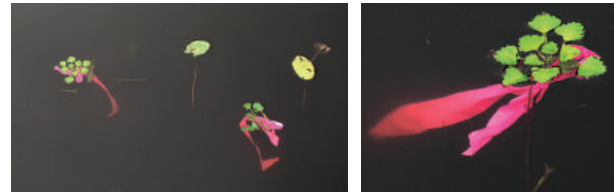
By boaters:

- Boats
- Ski Ropes
- Trailers
- Nets and other fishing tackle
- Anchors
- Etc.

Or by water fowl, such as Canada geese, because the seeds have barbs that stick to their feathers.

How to identify water chestnut

The water chestnut produces rosettes of two-inch arrowhead-shaped leaves. It is easily identified by its serrated, sawtooth edge. The water chestnut seed pod is dark and spiky.



Photos courtesy of Lake Hopatcong News

How to report Water Chestnut

- Mark the locations of all plants by tying brightly colored tape to each plant and/or use a mobile phone to record accurate GPS coordinates
- Take photographs of the plants and any identifying features on the nearby shoreline
- Note how many rosettes you see
- Report sightings immediately to Lake Hopatcong Foundation at 973-663-2500 or email waterchestnut@lakehopatcongfoundation.org

How to Volunteer

Email: volunteer@lakehopatcongfoundation.org to become a Lake Hopatcong Water Scout to learn how to identify, mark and properly remove this aggressive invasive species.

About the Lake Hopatcong Water Scout program

The Water Scouts were established by the Knee Deep Club in 2010. Water Scouts are volunteer paddlers, and each has a territory to cover to seek out, identify, and remove any water chestnut plants.

In that first year, 2010, one small colony of water chestnuts was discovered by a Water Scout in Landing Channel and promptly removed.

Now managed by the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, the Water Scouts have continued to monitor the lake every year – particularly in June and July, when the plants appear but before they drop their seeds. Two new outbreaks were discovered by Water Scouts during the summer of 2014 in the Jefferson Canals and near Liffy Island, where a small area was closed to boaters for several weeks to prevent further spread of the species, and more than 150 plants were removed by LHF staff and Water Scout volunteers.



Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

Water chestnuts are a major threat, but not the only invasive species that could do harm to Lake Hopatcong – we also have to keep an eye out for hydrilla and the fanwort, among others. To help keep water chestnut and ALL aquatic invasive species out of the lake, follow these guidelines:

After boating, before you leave the launch:

Clean:

Remove all visible plants, animals, fish, and mud from your boat, trailer, or other equipment and dispose of in a suitable trash container or on dry land.

Drain:

Drain water from bilge, live wells, ballast tanks, and any other locations with water before leaving the launch.

Before you arrive at the launch to go boating:

Dry:

Dry your boat, trailer, and all equipment completely. Drying times vary depending on the weather and the type of material. At least five days of drying time is generally recommended during the summer.



Be Vigilant

The water chestnut and other invasive species can take over entire sections of the lake in a relatively quick amount of time. And because of the many ways it can get to Lake Hopatcong, residents and visitors must always be on alert, because it will always be a threat to the lake environment and lake recreation.



WATER CHESTNUT

STOP

this aquatic hitchhiker from taking over Lake Hopatcong!



Know what to look for and what to do.

