

Curlyleaf Pondweed

Potamogeton crispus

Iowa Aquatic Invasive Species Fact Sheet

Description: Curlyleaf pondweed is a submersed, aquatic, perennial herb with thick roots. Stem is partially flattened, originating from a slender rhizome. Leaves are very wavy, crisp when mature, with serrated edges, prominent midvein with 3-5 veins, and blunt tipped. No floating leaves are produced. A flowered spike grows above water's surface. Tolerates cold weather, and reproduces mainly by turions produced from the leaf axils. It starts growing in the fall and winter, flowers in late spring, and dies in late July. Curlyleaf pondweed provides valuable waterfowl food.



Distribution: Curlyleaf pondweed is native to Eurasia, Africa, and Australia. It has spread aggressively since it was first introduced in the mid 1800's to North America. This aquatic plant can now be found in 48 states and has become invasive in many areas. Curlyleaf pondweed grows in standing water in lakes, ponds, and streams. It grows from the shoreline to depths of about 12 feet. It's found in several locations throughout the state of Iowa.

Threats: Curlyleaf pondweed out-competes native aquatic plants because it starts growing before native plants and forms dense stands. The dense stands may also cause problems with recreational activities such as fishing, swimming, and recreational watercraft users.

Control: At this time the curlyleaf pondweed is still considered an exotic plant and is very common in Iowa. However, in areas where the plant growth is causing problems, mechanical removal and herbicides have been employed. The success of these applications has varied in success.

Laws: Iowa law makes it illegal to 1) possess, introduce, purchase, sell, propagate, or transport aquatic invasive species in Iowa, 2) place a trailer or launch a watercraft with aquatic invasive species attached in public waters, and 3) operate a watercraft in a marked aquatic invasive species infestation. The scheduled fine is \$500 for violating any of the above regulations. The law also requires the DNR to identify waterbodies infested with aquatic invasive species and post signs alerting boaters. The DNR may restrict boating, fishing, swimming, and trapping in infested waters.

