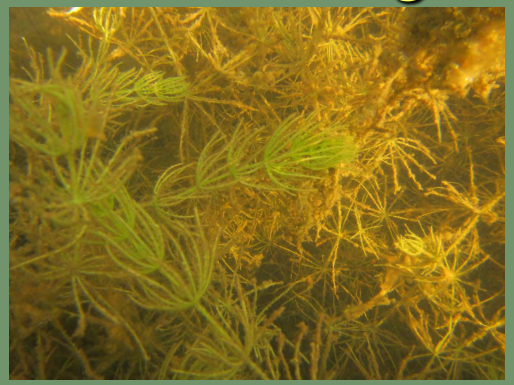
Pond Plant Identification

Its not all moss!

Click the text box below to figure out what it is…



…is floating or has floating leaves

…is all under the water

…is partially above the water

Is floating or has floating leaves

Algae

- Fine filaments
- Looks cottony
- Floating or attached to the pond bottom.

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Is floating or has floating leaves

Duckweed

- Larger than watermeal
- Have one or several roots per plant.

Watermeal

- Corn meal-sized plants
- No roots

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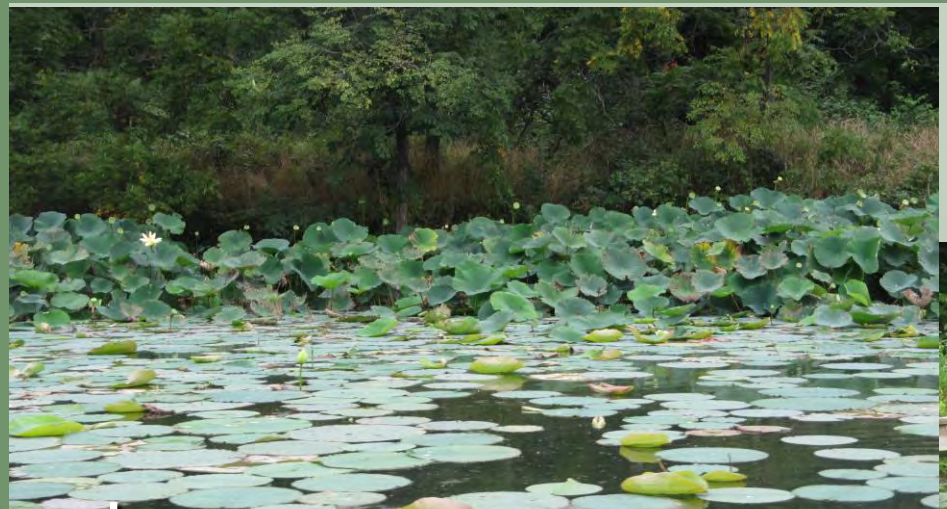
Is floating or has floating leaves



Lotus

- Is rooted, floating or above water
- Large, round leaves without a notch
- Stem attached to the center of the leaf.
- Pale yellow flower emerging from the water, becomes dried cup-shaped seed pod.
- Undesirable in ponds and lakes.

White Waterlily

- Is rooted
- Leaves are round and notched
- Flowers are white, no seed pod develops

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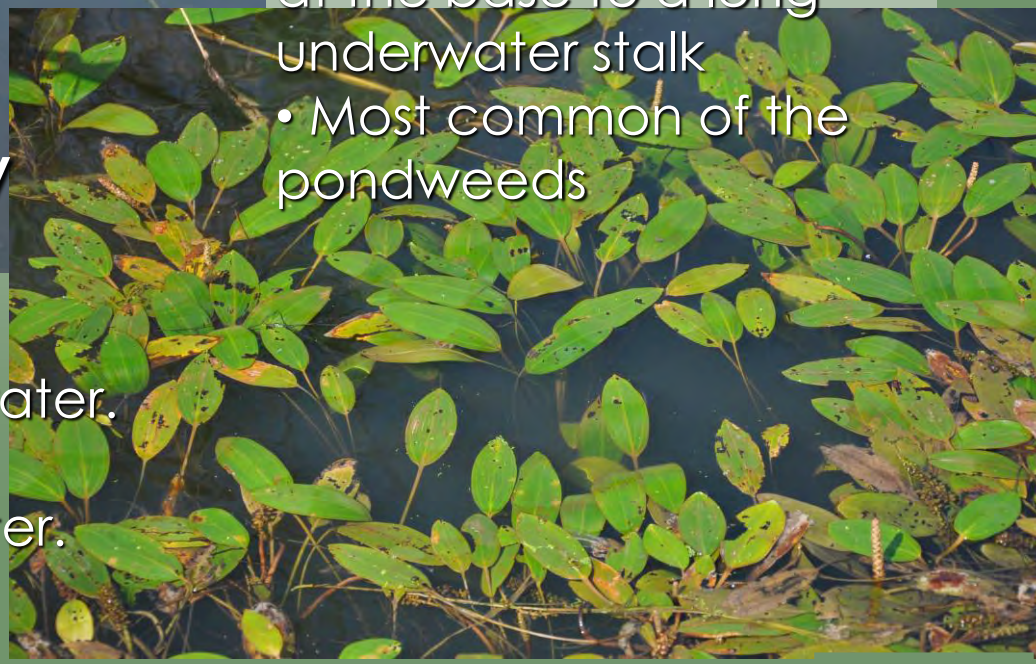
Is floating or has floating leaves

Longleaf pondweed

- Oval, tapered leaf floating on surface
- Floating leaf attached at the base to a long underwater stalk
- Most common of the pondweeds



Yellow waterlily

- Large, elliptical floating leaf.
- Leaf is notched
- Leaf can stand above the water.
- Small, round, yellow flower.
- No seed pod above the water.

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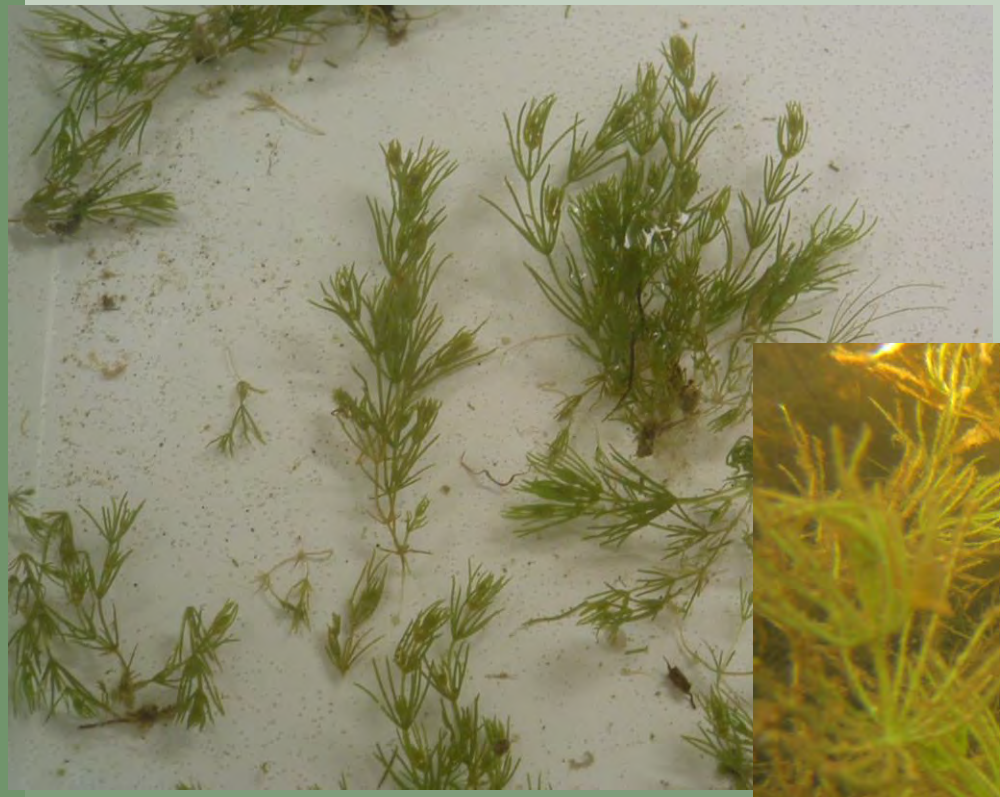
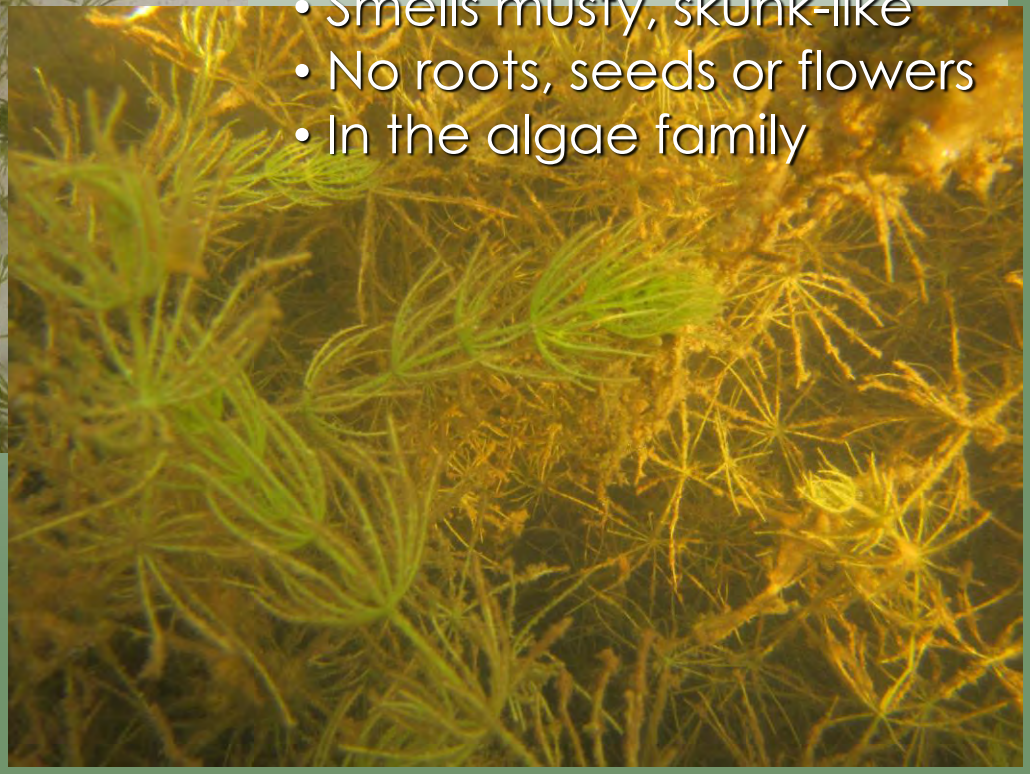
Is all under the water



Muskgrass

- Leaflets arranged in whorls along the stem
- Feels gritty
- Smells musty, skunk-like
- No roots, seeds or flowers
- In the algae family



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Next

Is all under the water

Coontail

- Leaflets arranged in whorls around the stem.
- Leaflets forked
- Very common

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Is all under the water

Canada water weed, Elodea

- Leaflets arranged in whorls around the stem
- 2-3 leaflets per whorl
- Long, green flowers on long white stem

Is all under the water

Northern milfoil

- Native
- Leaves arranged in whorls around the stem.
- Each leaf with 5-10 pairs of leaflets.
- Leaves can be rigid, or stiff

Is all under the water

Eurasian milfoil

- Introduced, invasive
- Leaves arranged in whorls around the stem.
- Each leaf with more than 12 pairs of leaflets.
- Leaves limp.

Is all under the water

Water Stargrass

- Leaves narrow, ribbon-like
  - Arranged alternately along the stem.
  - No midvein
-
-

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Is all under the water

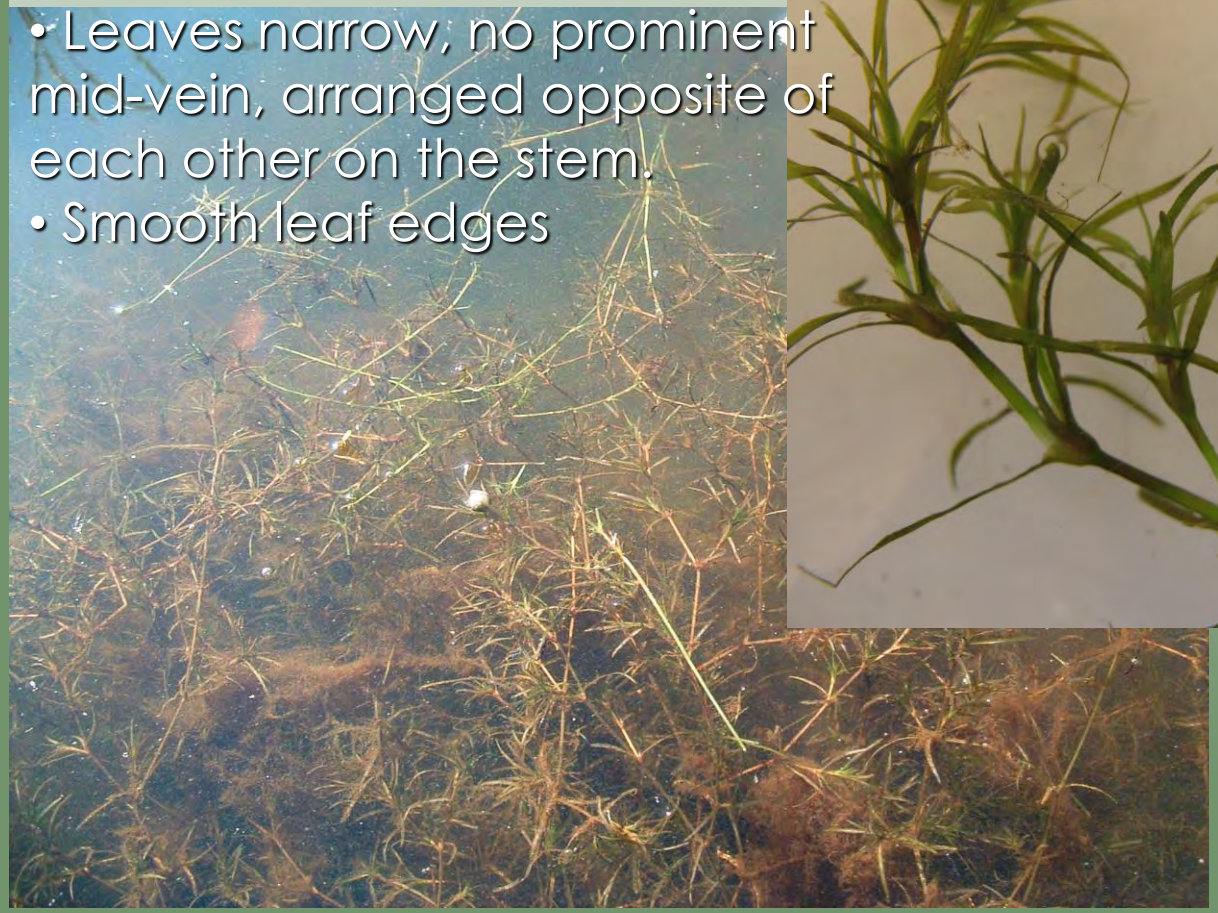
Wild Celery

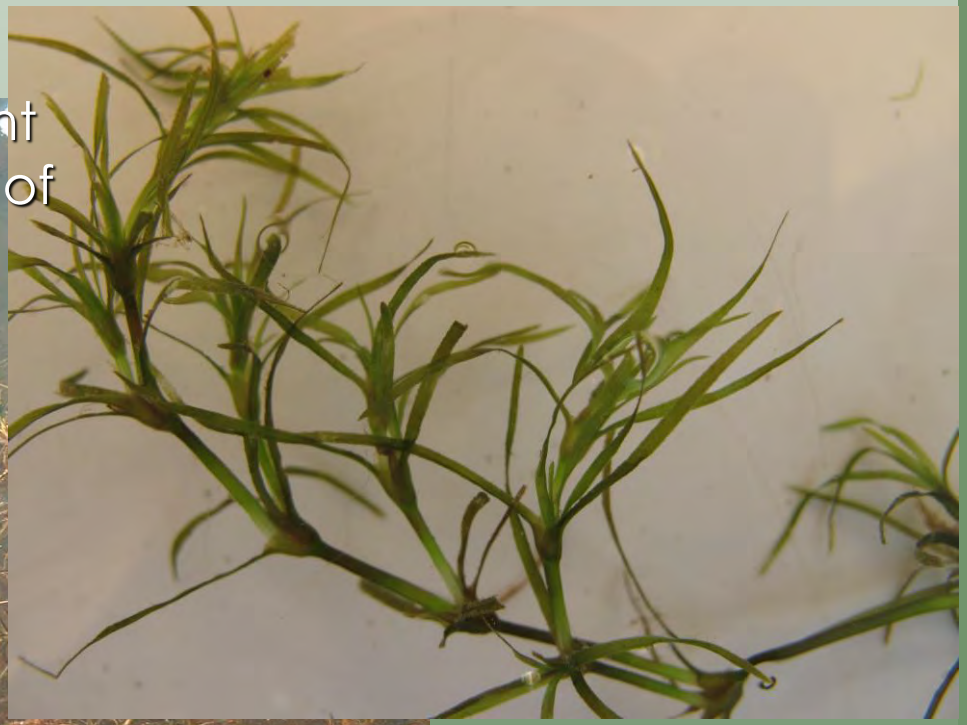
- Leaves narrow, ribbon-like
  - All coming from a single point above the roots.
  - No prominent mid-vein
- Plants spread by producing daughter plants on a root-like stolon.

Is all under the water

Slender Naiad

- Native
- Leaves narrow, no prominent mid-vein, arranged opposite of each other on the stem.
- Smooth leaf edges





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Is all under the water

Brittle Naiad

- Introduced, invasive
- Leaves narrow, no prominent mid-vein, arranged opposite of each other on the stem.
- Leaves arched back toward stem.
- Toothed or serrated leaf edges.
- Plant breaks apart easily at points of leaf attachment.

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Is all under the water

Curly Pondweed

- Introduced, invasive
- Leaf edges wavy and toothed, prominent mid-vein
- Leaves arranged alternately on the stem.
- Produces reproductive buds called turions.

Joe Morris, Iowa State University

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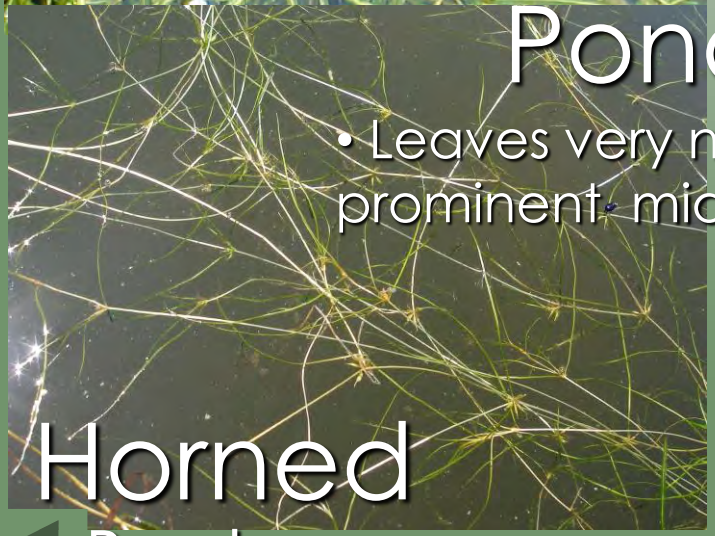
Is all under the water

Small-leaved Pondweeds

- Leaves very narrow, with or without prominent mid-vein.



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Is partially above the water

Cattails

- Long, D-shaped leaves.
- Distinctive brown seed head.
- Leaves appearing twisted.

River Bulrush

- Branched, triangular stem.
- Leaf cross-section M-shaped

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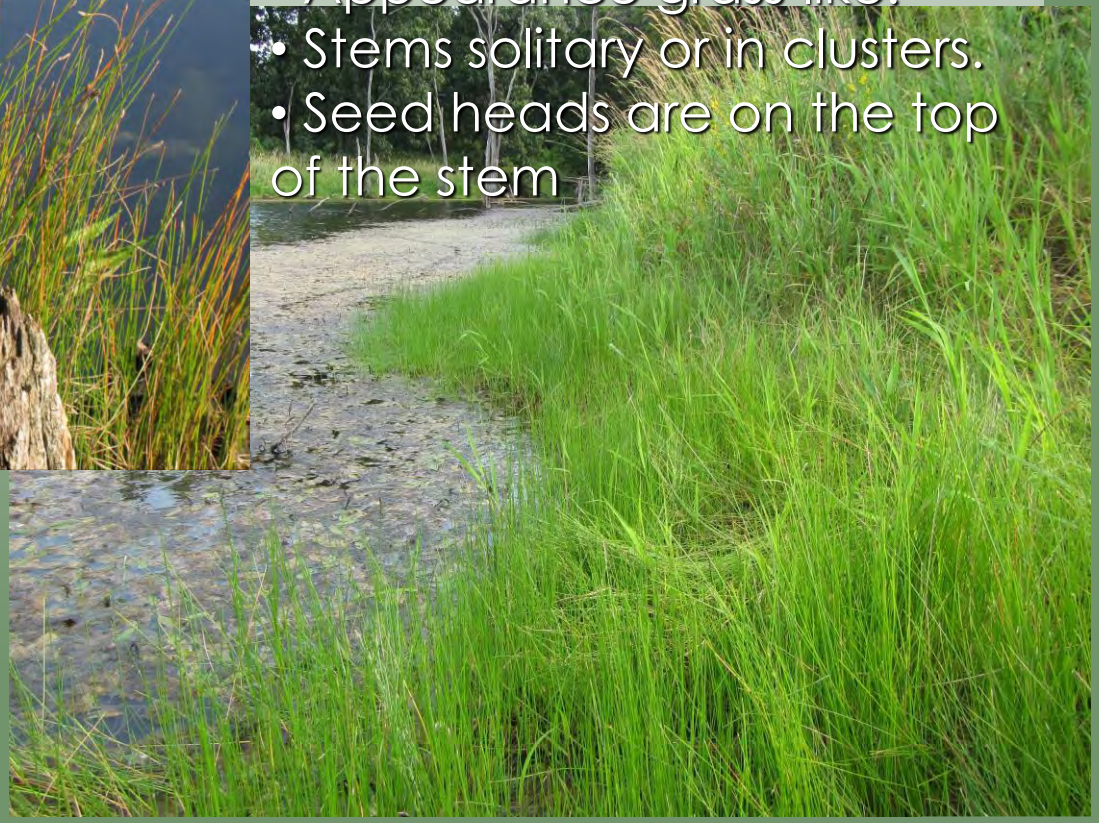
Is partially above the water

Spike Rush

- Common on pond edges
- Stems usually round
- Appearance grass-like.
- Stems solitary or in clusters.
- Seed heads are on the top of the stem



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Is partially above the water

Arrowhead

- Common on pond edges
- Leaves arrow- or lance-shaped.
- 3-petaled, white flowers in summer.

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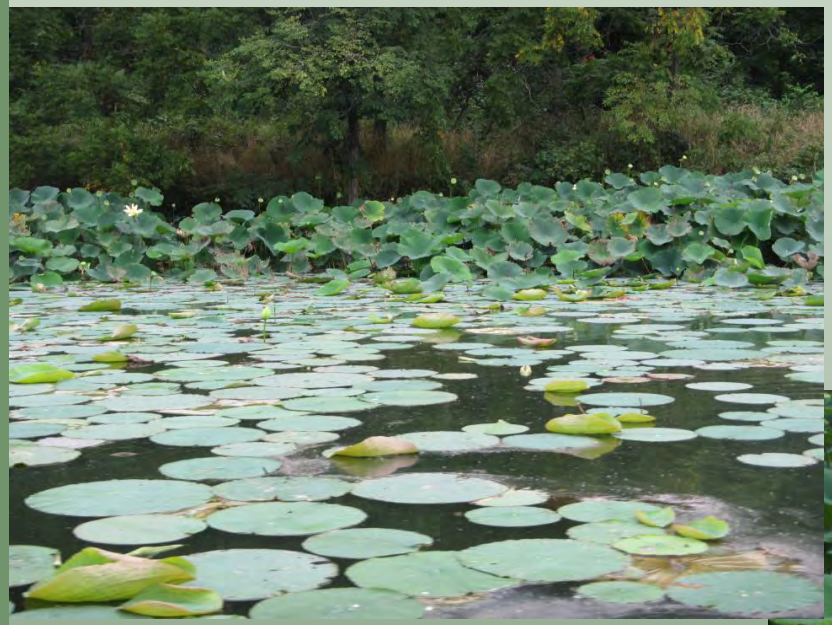
Is partially above the water



Lotus

- Can also be floating
- Round leaves without a notch
- Stem attached to the center of the leaf.
- Pale yellow flower emerging from the water.
- Undesirable in ponds and lakes.

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Is partially above the water

Yellow Waterlily

- Can also be floating
- Elliptical leaves are notched.
- Stem attached to the leaf off center.
- Small yellow flower emerging from the water.

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