

Brittle Naiad

Najas minor

Iowa Aquatic Invasive Species Fact Sheet

Description: Brittle naiad is a highly invasive, submersed annual aquatic plant. The stems of brittle naiad are highly branched and may grow to a length of 4 ft. or more. The stems fragment very easily, hence the term “brittle” naiad. The leaves are opposite or whorled, often recurved, with noticeable teeth on edges. Near the growing tips of the stems, the internodes are very short, giving a bushy appearance to the plant. The seeds have 12-18 rows of quadrangular pits. Reproduction is by seed production and fragmentation.



Distribution: Brittle naiad was introduced to the United States from Europe. It has established from Ontario west to Iowa and southward to Florida. It's now found in several lakes in Iowa.

Threats: Thick infestations of Brittle naiad can inhibit the growth of native aquatic vegetation and make fishing and recreational boating difficult. Brittle naiad plants are extremely brittle and have an increased risk of breaking apart, increasing the likelihood for it to spread via boats, waterfowl, and water movement.

Control: Brittle naiad has no natural controls (insects, fungi, bacteria) to limit its growth and spread in Iowa. Therefore, control efforts focus on preventing the introduction of Brittle naiad into new waterbodies. Fragments of aquatic plants cling to boats, trailers, boating equipment (anchors, centerboards, fishing lines, bait bucket, etc.), and hunting equipment (decoy anchors, waders, etc.). If not removed, these fragments can start new populations when introduced into another waterbody. It is imperative to remove all vegetation and drain water from the livewell, bilge, transom well, and impeller before leaving water accesses. Empty bait buckets on land, and never release live bait into a waterbody or transfer aquatic animals or plants from one waterbody to another. Wash/dry boats, trailers, and other equipment to kill harmful species that are not visible at the water access. Limiting the spread of Brittle naiad infestations and minimizing the impacts of infestations are much more difficult than preventing introductions. Problems caused by Brittle naiad infestations are managed with conventional methods such as treatment with herbicides or mechanical removal of plants.

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.