Aquatic Plant Identification Guide

Floating leaved

Snohomish County Surface Water Management
Lakes Management Program
425-388-3204
lakes@snoco.org
www.lakes.surfacewater.info
Native Aquatic Plants

• Part of a healthy lake system; benefit people and wildlife
• Good for fish – provide food and cover, act as a “nursery” for juvenile fish.
• Have natural controls - animals that eat them
• Usually do not cause major problems

Common native floating-leaf plants in Snohomish County are:
• Yellow water-lily
• Watershield
• Duckweed
• Large-leaf pondweed
• Watermeal
Invasive Aquatic Plants

- Grow densely, with few natural enemies; adaptable
- Out-compete & displace native plants
- Create nuisance conditions in lakes: disrupting swimming, fishing, and boating
- Once established - high cost to control

Floating-leaved invasive plants in Snohomish County include:
- Fragrant Waterlily
- European frog-bit
You Can Help Prevent Invasive Plants

- Prevention is best approach - much cheaper to prevent than eradicate
- **Clean, drain and dry your boat**
  - before launching and when leaving

**Milfoil is a BIG problem:**
- Hinders boating, swimming and fishing
- Forms thick mats of vegetation
- Spreads easily by hitching a ride on boats and trailers
You can help stop it!

**STOP MILFOIL**
Remove all plant fragments

Check boats & trailers before launching & when leaving

Please act responsibly. Transporting milfoil is illegal. R.C.W. 77.15.290
Fragrant water-lily
_Nymphaea odorata_

- Introduced for ornamental purposes with showy white or pink flowers with round pads
- Spreads by rhizomes and seeds
- Unmanaged, can dominate shallow water areas filling them & displacing native plants.
- Found at many lakes in Snohomish County
- Learn about control options
  - Report new locations to lakes@snoco.org
Yellow water-lily or Spatterdock
*Nuphar polysepala*

- Native plant widespread in Snohomish County
- Large floating, heart-shaped leaves that sometimes stick out of water with yellow to red poppy-like flower
- Usually stays to edges and provides critical food and habitat for aquatic life
Fragrant water lily

Yellow water lily
Watershield  
*Brasenia schreberi*

- Found in at least 7 lakes in Snohomish County
- Oval leaves with purple undersides and reddish leaf stalks
- A distinctive thick coating of gelatinous slime can be found on the stems and undersides of new leaves
- Provides good fish and wildlife habitat; leaves and rhizomes have been used as food source by Native Americans
Large-Leaf Pondweed
Potamogeton amplifolius

- Second most widespread plant in Snohomish County
- Provides great cover for fish and food for aquatic life
- Can grow densely with patches shifting from year-to-year
- 2 distinct leaf types
  - Underwater leaf type - broad and arching
  - Floating leaf type - bright green often with flower
- Most common of several species of with floating leaves
European frog-bit
*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*

- Small, floating, heart-shaped leaves; white flowers
- Problem plant in Ontario and northeast U.S.
- Established in Meadow Lake (only location in WA)
- Aggressively spreads forming thick mats
- Produces from seeds and over-wintering turions
Lesser duckweed

_Lemna minor_

- Tiny flowering plants; floating on surface
- No true leaves; single rootlet below each plant
- Can form thick mats or scums
- High nutrient value for fish and wildlife; habitat for aquatic invertebrates
Watermeal
*Wolffia* spp.

- Smallest flowering plant in world
- No true leaves; no roots
- Can form thick mats or scums
Need more plant ID help?

• Aquatic plants are often hard to identify and not all are shown in this presentation. We can help - email a photo to lakes@snoco.org.

• See what plants have been found in your lake from the WA State Department of Ecology Lake Database or see their full aquatic plant identification manual.