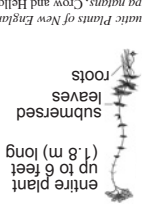
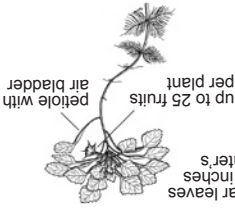


# Water Chestnut WATCH

## How to Identify Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*)



Aquatic Plants of New England Series:  
*Trapa natans*, Crow and Hellquist 1983  
Illustration by Pam Bruns



green, glossy triangular leaves  
with toothed edges, 2 inches  
(5.08 cm) wide, on water's  
surface

fruit with 4  
sharp spines  
- green when  
fresh, black  
when dry

## General Characteristics

- Floating aquatic plant that forms dense mats of vegetation
- Leaf stems are long with a spongy swollen section that helps the plant float
- Water chestnut doesn't look like any other plant species



Photo Credit: Pierre B. Jodreau



Photo Credit: Maryland DNR

## ***Water Chestnut***

Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is a floating aquatic invasive plant that doesn't look like any other aquatic plant found in Ontario. The plants form extremely dense floating mats of vegetation which can shade out native vegetation, decrease plant biodiversity, and reduce oxygen levels which can lead to fish kills. The thick mats of vegetation also make recreational activities like swimming, angling, and boating extremely difficult. The fruits' "nuts" which have sharp spines can accumulate on shore and cause injury when stepped on.

Water chestnut is native to Europe, Asia, and Africa, and can be used in North America as an ornamental water garden plant. Water chestnut was discovered in a section of the Ottawa River in eastern Ontario, adjacent to Voyageur Provincial Park. The Ottawa River population of water chestnut may have resulted from the disposal of water garden plants into the river, or by a boat contaminated with water chestnut being launched within or near the park. Your help detecting and reporting new infestations is vital to prevent the spread of water chestnut and other invasive plants.

## ***What you can do***

- **Learn** to identify water chestnut (see back cover)
- **Inspect** and remove aquatic plants and animals from boat, motor and trailer
- **Drain** lake or river water from livewell and bilge before leaving access
- **Dispose** of unwanted plants in the trash
- **Rinse** boat and equipment with high-pressure water (250 psi) OR hot water (50°C/122°F), OR **dry** everything for at least 5 days
- **Report** new sightings – note the exact location; wrap a specimen in wet paper towel, place in a sealed plastic bag; or take a clear photograph; and call the OFAH/MNR *Invading Species Hotline*, 1-800-563-7711.

*OFAH and MNR thank the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for the use of watch card design and selected content*

