

What Are These “Weeds”?

Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Invasive Plants FAQs

What is an aquatic invasive species?

- An aquatic invasive species is defined as a species that is: 1) non-native (or alien) to the aquatic ecosystem under consideration and. 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Do aquatic invasive species exist in Chautauqua Lake?

- Yes, there are two well established invasive plant species in Chautauqua Lake, Curly Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil. At least two others have been detected in small amounts.¹

Can aquatic invasive plants cause harm to native plants and wildlife?

- Yes, aquatic invasive plants tend to start growing early in the season, prior to native plants and will create dense mats making it difficult for other plants to grow and impede movement of fish and waterfowl.

What are the costs associated with managing aquatic invasive species?

- While it is difficult to approximate the exact cost associated with invasive species management in Chautauqua Lake, an estimated \$200 million is spent annually combating aquatic invasive species within the expanse of the Great Lakes system (U.S.).²

Are all aquatic invasive plants dangerous to human health?

- Not necessarily; however, they often create conditions favorable for other harmful invasive species to take up residence as well as harmful algae that can have a negative effect on human health.³

How are invasive aquatic plant species introduced into new systems?

- Recreational boating and fishing are primary pathways by which invasive aquatic plant species colonize new areas. Plant parts can become attached and easily transported in bilge and live bait wells, on boats, trailers and fishing gear.
- Some aquatic invasive plants may be introduced naturally via waterfowl, wind or insects.

Can aquatic invasive plants be eradicated or managed?

- Many control methods exist and typically a combination of management treatments and techniques produce the most successful results. However, eradication becomes less feasible and management becomes much more expensive the longer the invasive species has been established.
- Prevention and early detection are the most effective methods of aquatic invasive plant management.

Where can I find more information about aquatic invasive plants?

- There are a number of resources that exist online and more information can be found by visiting the following websites:
 - USDA APHIS: www.aphis.usda.gov
 - NYS DEC: www.dec.ny.gov
 - WNY PRISM: www.wnyprism.org

Who should I contact if I identify a new aquatic invasive plant in Chautauqua Lake?

- The Chautauqua Lake Association’s Watercraft Stewards Program can assist with boat inspection and answer questions. Contact the CLA by calling 716-763-8602.
- Report your finding to NY iMapInvasives (<https://www.nyimapinvasives.org/>)

How can I get involved in aquatic invasive plant monitoring?

- Join the Chautauqua Lake Early Detection Volunteer Network by calling the Roger Tory Peterson Institute at 716-665-2473 or by emailing invasives@rtpi.org

¹ Johnson, R. L. (2017). “Late Spring 2017 Presence and Abundance of Aquatic Plants in Chautauqua Lake.” Racine-Johnson Aquatic Ecologists, 1185 Ellis Hollow Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. pp. 1-107.

² U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. (2012). The Cost of Invasive Species. Retrieved from: <https://www.fws.gov/verobeach/PythonPDF/CostofInvasivesFactSheet.pdf>

³ Sea Grant Pennsylvania. Curly Leaf Pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*. Retrieved from: https://seagrant.psu.edu/sites/default/files/CLP2013_reduced_0.pdf

This project is a collaboration between the Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance (Alliance) and the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History. Funding was provided from the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, through the generous support of Senator Catharine Young. Chautauqua County provided support in the form of a pass-through grant to the Alliance.