



Lake Stewards of Maine

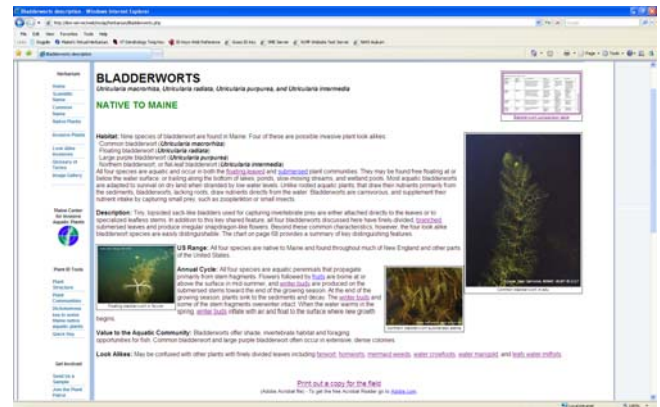


Maine's Interactive Field Guide to Aquatic Invaders

www.lakestewardsme.org/mciap/herbarium

The **Interactive Field Guide to Aquatic Invaders**, based on the *Maine Field Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants*, provides users with a number of enhancements, including:

- Photos, line drawings and scanned images including plants in situ (what one would see from a boat), close-up shots, micrographs of key structures such as fruits and bracts for the 11 invasive aquatic plants on Maine's watch list and their native "look-alikes"
- Easy cross reference links providing comparisons of the invaders and their native "look-alikes"
- Factual information for each of the featured plants including: habitat, species description, origin and range, annual cycle, value in the aquatic community (for native species) and potential impacts (for invasive species)
- Comparison Charts for quick identification of similar species
- A Plant Identification Key to help determine possible identification for plant specimens
- A dichotomous Quick Key to identifying (or ruling out) the eleven invasive species
- Botanical terms are hyperlinked to an illustrated glossary



Much work is being done at the state and local level to prevent the spread of invasive plants into Maine's lakes, ponds and streams. Prevention of the spread of these organisms through raising public awareness and encouraging routine boat inspections is, as it should be, the primary focus of Maine's effort at present. Experience in other states has shown, however, that prevention is not enough. Prevention efforts, no matter how comprehensive in scope, are never 100% effective. If and when an invader *does* slip through the cracks, the best hope for eradicating it, or at least managing it in an environmentally sound manner, is *early detection*. This is where the *Interactive Field Guide* comes in.

Relatively few of Maine's 6000+ lakes and ponds and thousands of miles of rivers have been screened for the presence of invasive plants. Developing, implementing and sustaining a comprehensive early detection team in a state with so much aquatic plant habitat is a daunting task. If Maine's early detection program is to be effective, all Mainers who have an interest in the protection of our water resources, volunteers, professionals, agency personnel, students, lake association members, boaters, anglers, civic groups and others must be encouraged to participate in the effort, and be provided with the information and technical support needed to succeed.

Through its Invasive Plant Patrol Program (initiated in 2001) the Lake Stewards of Maine has trained over 4500 volunteers to screen for and identify the eleven invasive aquatic plants on Maine's watch-list and to distinguish them from harmless native "look-alike" plants. The new *Maine Field Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants* and the *Quick Key to Ruling out Maine's Eleven Most Unwanted Invasive Aquatic Plants*, provide handy, field-friendly resources for trained patrollers and the general public. The purpose of the *Interactive Field Guide* is to complement these publications with a widely accessible, easily revised and expandable resource.