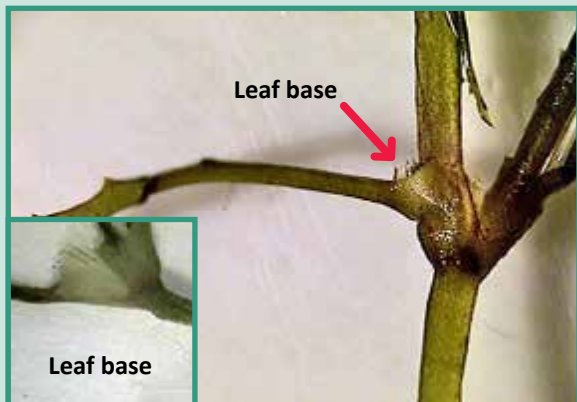




Plants grow from slender roots, developing stems up to 2.5 meters long, that often branch profusely near the top.



The leaf arrangement is not strict: leaves may appear to be opposite, sub-opposite, in whorls or clumps. The leaves are small (rarely more than 3.5cm long) and very slender (0.3 – 0.5mm wide), strap-shaped, gently curving with pointed tips, and serrations along the outer margins.



The base of the leaf is blocky or fan-shaped (as opposed to gently flaring). The upper margin of the leaf base is finely-toothed or “fringed” in appearance. You may need to carefully pull the leaf away from the stem and use a hand lens to see the base clearly.*

Under the Hand Lens:

European
Naiad

Najas minor

This aquatic invader can be tricky to recognize. Here is a quick primer on some of the key characteristics to watch for.



Unlike most native naiads whose leaf serrations or spines are virtually “invisible” to the unaided eye, the leaf serrations of European naiad, though tiny, can usually be observed without magnification. Tip: use a hand lens to find serrations, then take the lens away. Can you see the serrations? If yes, be suspicious!



Like all naiads, European naiad is an annual. The flowers and fruits are small, inconspicuous, and borne in the leaf axils. The seeds are purplish, 1.5 to 3.0mm long, spindle-shaped and may be slightly curved, with rectangular indentations arranged in distinct, longitudinal rows.

**Thread-like naiad (Najas gracillima), a less-common native naiad, also has visible serrations and blocky leaf bases. When in doubt always rule on the side of caution and treat the plant as a suspected invader, i.e., mark the location of the plant (ideally on a map and with a buoy), collect a specimen, and contact the VLMP for further instructions.*