

Background

Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is an invasive aquatic plant native to Eurasia and Africa. It was brought to the US for ornamental use in the mid 1800s and was introduced to Collin's Lake (Schenectady county) in 1884. Water chestnut has since spread rapidly throughout the Capital/Mohawk region.

Unlike most other aquatic invasive plants that can reproduce by fragmentation, water chestnut acts as an annual. However, each seed can produce up to 20 new rosettes, each new rosette can produce up to 20 seeds for the follow year.

Hand pulling can successfully manage water chestnut growth by limiting its seed production.



Measure Success

Collect data on the harvest each year in order to evaluate the effectiveness of your methods and address any changes that need to be made

- ◆ Map the surface area of the infestation before and after harvesting
- ◆ Measure the volume or the number of plants removed
- ◆ Keep track of the number of people, how many hours were spent, etc.



Questions?

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How to Host a Water Chestnut Pull



Capital/Mohawk PRISM

Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management

Who

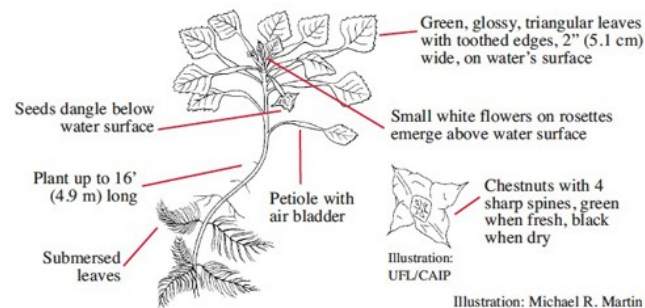
- ♦ Water chestnut pulls are best suited in areas where there is a community of people affected by the infestation. This could include a lake association or any other type of group that uses the infested waterbody (ie., community groups, environmental organizations).
- ♦ Pulls can also act as an educational opportunity for student/youth groups, scouts, camps, 4H, etc.

When

Mid-June to mid-August in order to remove plants before new seeds mature. The earlier you hold your pull in the season, the more important it is to pull the entire plant, nutlet (seed) included, as it may still be viable to grow more rosettes. The later you hold your pull, the more important it is to pull each plant gently and turn it upside down to prevent any potentially mature seeds from dropping.

Materials Needed

- ♦ Any combination of kayaks, canoes, rowboats, and waders
- ♦ Gloves (to protect hands from sharp nutlets)
- ♦ Something to collect the plant material in (ex. heavy duty trash bags, plastic bins, plastic laundry baskets)



Where to Dispose

Any disposal method must assure that there is no possibility for viable seeds to be re-released into a waterbody.

- ♦ Put materials in the garbage
- ♦ Bring to a facility capable of hot composting
- ♦ Allow to decompose in an open space away from any waterbody or wetland. If possible, cover with a tarp to solarize

Plant material must not just be left along the shoreline where 1.) it can be reintroduced and 2.) nutrients from decomposing plants will be washed back into the water.

Methods

Before starting any new management activity, it's important to know what your goal is.

For eradication:

- ♦ Start from the outer edge of the plant bed and work inward
- ♦ Make sure to pull stragglers that are away from the main bed
- ♦ Return each year to what will hopefully be a smaller bed of plants

For access (not with intention of eradication):

- ♦ Begin by carving a path from shore to the main waterway
- ♦ Return each year to keep path and/or widen

Some groups have individuals pull from kayaks, canoes, and small rowboats and some one in a larger motor boat, such as a pontoon, collects the load and brings it to shore where they will be picked up to properly dispose.

*** Always revisit the site a month after to pull any regrowth**

