

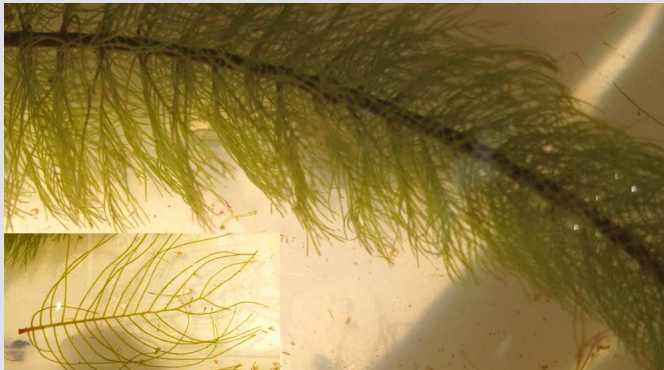
# Myriophyllum heterophyllum

Invasive to Maine

Variable Watermilfoil

Freshwater  
Ponds and Lakes

## Leaves



Ruthie Hawley



Look for submerged leaves that are divided like feathers. Each whorl has 4 to 6 feather-divided leaves that are spaced less than 5 mm apart. There are 5 to 14 pairs of thread-like leaflets per leaf (see diagram).

PLANT COMMUNITY	LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF SHAPE	LEAF DIVISION
 EMERGENT	 ALTERNATE	 ELLIPTICAL	 FEATHER DIVIDED
 FLOATING LEAF	 OPPOSITE	 BLADE	 TOOTHED
 SUBMERSED	 WHORLED	 OVAL	 SMOOTH

## Plant



Leslie Merhoff



Look for submerged plants that look like raccoon tails. V. watermilfoil grows underwater up to 5 m deep with flower spikes emerging from June through August.

## Stem



Ruthie Hawley



Look for stems that are often thick and reddish in color.

## Seasonal Change



Ann Murray CFAP/Leslie J. Mehrhoff UC



From late June through August look for flowers that are tiny and white. They appear in whorls (see chart above) on spikes that rise above the water.

## Similar Species

Variable watermilfoil and 2 native species, Farwell's and Low watermilfoils, have a very small space between the whorls of leaves (less than 5 mm). Variable watermilfoil always forms whorls and has flowers above the surface. The native species do not always form whorls and have underwater flowers.

## Did You Know?

Variable watermilfoil grows well in all conditions: still and flowing waters, under ice, at depths of 1 to 5 meters, in mud, silt, sand, and gravel. When lakes dry up, it can even change into a land plant and survive until the water comes back.

If you think you found this species, call Maine's  
Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program: 207-783-7733 OR Department  
of Environmental Protection: 1-800-452-1942