

Najas minor

European Naiad,
Spiny Leaf Naiad, Brittle Naiad

Invasive to Maine

Freshwater
Ponds and Lakes

Leaves



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, www.bugwood.org, Diagram USDA

Look for leaves (2 to 3 cm) that are thin, pointed, and have toothed, spiny edges. The leaf base that wraps around the stem is jagged and square, not round (see "Similar Species"). Leaves can be alternate, opposite, or whorled!

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

Plant



Troy Evans, www.bugwood.org, Diagram USDA

Look for an underwater plant with lots of thin branches and leaves. European naiad is found growing at depths of 15 cm to 2 m.

Stem



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, www.bugwood.org

Look for stems that are thin and flexible. They grow up to 3 m long and have many branches at the upper end of the stem.

Seasonal Change



Hippolyte Coste

From July to August look for green flowers that are as small as a grain of sand, growing in the crevices between the leaves and stem.

Similar Species

With a hand lens or microscope, you can tell invasive European naiad apart from native Slender naiad by looking at the base of the leaves (where they attach to the stem). The European naiad has a jagged, square-shaped leaf base. The Slender naiad has a smooth rounded leaf base.

Did You Know?

The European naiad's stem is easy to break. Because of its fragile stem it is sometimes called the Brittle naiad. It can grow a whole new plant from tiny pieces that break off (fragmentation.) These pieces can get caught on boats and travel to new places. Not so fun for our lakes!

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