

Photo: John Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org



Parrotfeather



Parrotfeather forms dense mats Photo: Nancy Loewenstein, Auburn University, Bugwood.org



Parrotfeather resembles mini fir trees. Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

What Is It?

Parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) is a bright green aquatic plant with leaves that grow above the water and resemble tiny fir trees. It grows in slow moving rivers, ditches, and shallow freshwater lakes and ponds, as well as on wet soil along shorelines. Parrotfeather rapidly forms dense mats of vegetation that can take over shallow lakes, ponds, and ditches. It is native to South America.

Is It Here Yet?

Yes. Parrotfeather has been documented across western Washington, and, to a limited extent, in eastern Washington.

Why Should I Care?

Parrotfeather rapidly forms dense vegetation mats that can cover the water surface entirely. Additionally, this noxious weed increases flooding, blocks passage for salmon, causes water quality issues, shades out algae that form the base of the aquatic food web, and provides habitat for mosquito larvae. The tough stems challenge boaters, swimmers, and other water recreationists.

What Are Its Characteristics?

- Parrotfeather has bright green, stiff, feathery leaves that can extend up to 1 foot above the water and resemble very small fir trees.
- Leaves are arranged in whorls of 4-6 around the stem.



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- The plant forms a dense mat of intertwined brownish stems in the water and may have reddish, feathery-leaved, limp underwater leaves.
- Flowers are hard to see. They are small and white and grow where the leaves meet the stem.
- Parrotfeather differs from the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil by its above-water leaves.

How Can We Stop It?

Do not purchase, plant, or trade this species. Parrotfeather is on Washington's Wetlands and Aquatics Quarantine list, meaning it is prohibited to transport, buy, sell, offer for sale, or distribute parrotfeather plants or plant parts. Parrotfeather is listed as a Class B noxious weed in Washington, meaning it is designated for control in certain state regions. Parrotfeather plant fragments may stick to boats and move to other water bodies where they will regrow. Clean, drain, and dry boats before transporting them elsewhere.

What Should I Do If I Find It?

Report immediately via the WA Invasives mobile app or reporting web form at <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/>.



Close up of a parrotfeather plant.
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Conservancy, Bugwood.org