

Curly Waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*)

Habitat: Terrestrial.

Family name: Hydrocharitaceae



Description:

A perennial, aquatic plant which can grow up to 3 m completely submerged under the water in chalk, gravel and clay pits, lakes, reservoirs

and canals. Leaves are strongly curved and whorled around the stem though are spirally arranged on the lower part of stem. Flowers are inconspicuous and borne separately as male and female flowers.



A totally submerged aquatic with rhizomes rooted in the bottom mud and shoots which reach the water's surface these can grow in waters up to a depth of around three metres or more and still reach up to the surface.



Birds, other animals, boats, fishing equipment, waders can spread fragments of this plant to potential new sites of infestation.

Curly Waterweed produces dense pure growths in suitable conditions and can shade out other aquatic plant species and damage associated invertebrate communities.

It is particularly adapted to alkaline waters such as those found in limestone areas and can locally affect the water's pH, making it even more alkaline to such a degree that photosynthesis by other plants is inhibited.



Curly Waterweed is also known as Curly Water Thyme. Its correct scientific name is *Lagarosiphon major*, but it is often sold in aquatic garden centres under the incorrect name of *Elodea crispata* (there is no such species)



Reproduction:

Plants spread mainly by vegetative propagation through detached stem fragments and can become easily established.

Only female plants have been recorded in Ireland, so seed production plays no part in dispersal which is entirely by means of fragmentation of the shoots or rhizomes.



Flowers are somewhat similar to those of *Elodea* and are unisexual, borne on separate male and female plants.

Curly Waterweed can be an aggressive weed in still or slow flowing waters increasing at the expense of other alien submerged aquatics, such as:- Canadian pondweed and Nuttall's pondweed (*Elodea canadensis* and *E. nuttallii*)