

Parrots Feather

(*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)



Habitat: Aquatic, freshwater
Family name: Haloragaceae
Common name: Parrots Feather



Parrots Feather stand

Description:

Parrots feather is native to the Amazon River in South America, but it can now be found on every continent except Antarctica.

Parrots feather typically grows in freshwater streams, ponds, lakes, rivers, and canals that have a high nutrient content. While parrot feather may provide cover for some aquatic organisms, it can seriously change the physical and chemical characteristics of lakes and streams.



Parrots feather leaves

Parrots feather gets its name from its feather-like leaves that are arranged around the stem in whorls of four to six.



Parrots feather leaf whorls



Parrots feather flowers

The emergent stems and leaves are the most distinctive trait of parrots feather, as they can grow up to a foot above the water surface and look like small fir trees.

The woody emergent stems grow over 1.5 m long and will extend to the bank and shore.

Attached to the Parrots feather are small pinkish-white flowers.

As the water warms in the spring, parrots feather begins to flourish.

Most plants flower in the spring; however, some also flower in autumn. Almost all plants of this species are female, no male plants are found outside South America.

The plant has whorls of feathery blue-green to waxy grey-green leaves deeply cut into many narrow lobes.



Parrots feather leaves

Parrots feather reproduces asexually.

New plants grow from fragments of already rooted plants.



Parrots feather leaves & flowers



Parrots feather infestation

The species spreads easily and has become an invasive species and a noxious weed in many areas.

The plant can be introduced to new areas when sections of its rhizome are dug up and moved.

Parrots feather grows abundantly, shades out naturally occurring algae, and clogs irrigation ducts and canals.



Parrots feather infestation

The plant typically forms bundles and can extend out of the water. In large numbers, the plants make a dense mat on the water's surface shading the water from sunlight and causing native plants to die due to light deficiency.

Organisms that feed on native plants can also die off due to starvation.

Dense mats also cause problems for swimmers and boat propellers the plant also provides a rich breeding ground for mosquitoes.