



Water chestnut

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Common Name	water chestnut
Genus & Species	<i>Trapa natans</i>
Family	Lythraceae
Order	Myrtales
Class	Magnoliopsida

Diagnosis: This annual plant has whorled triangular shaped leaves that float on the surface and highly dissected feathery submersed leaves. The floating leaves are dark green with toothed edges. Individuals are attached to the substrate through long bouyant roots that can grow up to 6 to 16ft long. This species has a single white flower with four petals located in the center of the floating leaves. The flower forms one large seed with four sharp spines.

Ecology: *T. natans* flowers in July and seed within a month of pollination. Seeds sink to the bottom of the water body. Seeds can remain viable for up to 12 years and one seed can form 10 to fifteen new rosettes.



Habitat & Distribution: *T. natans* can be found in shallow quiet areas of rivers, streams, ponds and lakes up to 16ft deep. *T. natans* has also been found in slightly saline areas of estuaries and exposed mud flats. This species will form dense floating mats, outcompeting native aquatic plant species. *T. natans* is native to the temperate climates of Eurasia. It has been present in North America since 1879 as a water garden ornamental. Populations can now be found throughout the Northeast including NY, NJ, PA, DE, MY, NH, MA, CT and VT.

Status: This species can spread through seed and rosettes that break off from floating mats. Rosettes can become attached to wildlife and humans.

USGS Fact Sheet: <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.aspx?SpeciesID=263>