

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Eurasian watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum

Other common names: Spike watermilfoil

USDA symbol: MYSP2
ODA rating: B



Introduction: EWM is a highly invasive aquatic plant generating large quantities of biomass in lakes and ponds each year. Many water bodies are rendered unusable for fishing, boating and swimming due to EWM invasion. Its widespread distribution has been attributed to aquarium dumping, waterfowl, plant fragments on boats and flood events.

Distribution in Oregon: It is common throughout western Oregon and the Columbia Basin.

Description: Eurasian watermilfoil is a perennial aquatic plant, rooted to the bottom and extending to the surface in shallow lakes and ponds. Purplish red-branching stems have feather-like leaves in whorls of four at each node. Male flowers are purplish while whitish flowers are female; all projecting above the water surface for pollination. The plant primarily reproduces through stem fragmentation.

Impacts: Eurasian watermilfoil creates significant economic impacts to waterways, irrigation ditches, and drainage canals, inhibiting flow and increasing vegetation removal costs. It is also a pest of rivers, lakes and ponds where it reduces water quality, impedes recreation and boat access and has adverse impacts on fish habitat. Elevated nutrient levels created by erosion, fertilizers or urban effluent provide nutrients stimulating rapid growth. Expensive control projects frequently target this plant across North America.

Biological controls: One biocontrol agent, the watermilfoil moth, has been approved for this plant.

