

# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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## Law Prohibits Exotic Aquatic Plants

Since January 1, 1998, the sale, distribution, importation, propagation, transportation and introduction of key exotic aquatic plants has been prohibited (RSA 487:16-a). This law was designed as a tool for lake managers to help prevent the further spread of nuisance aquatic plants. Shortly after that, RSA 487:16-b was added, establishing penalties for violations of this act. It is hoped that by preventing their transport over land, their spread between waterbodies will be stopped. The following is a list of prohibited exotic aquatic species in New Hampshire.

Latin Name	Common Name
All <i>Myriophyllum</i> species	Milfoils or feather-foils
All <i>Cabomba</i> species	Fanworts
<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	Hydrilla or Anacharis
All <i>Trapa</i> species	Water chestnut
<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>	Curly-leaf pondweed
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple loosestrife
<i>Phragmites australis</i> or <i>P. communis</i>	Common reed
<i>Egeria densa</i>	Brazilian elodea
<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>	European frogbit
<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	Flowering rush
<i>Najas minor</i>	European naiad
<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>	Yellow floating heart
<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Swamp stonecrop
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great willow herb or hairy willow herb
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	Reed sweet grass or manna grass
<i>Hygrophila polysperma</i>	East Indian Hygrophila
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Water spinach
<i>Iris pseudocarus</i>	Yellow iris or yellow flag iris
<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	African oxygen weed
<i>Limnophila sessiliflora</i>	Ambulia
<i>Marsilea quadriflora</i>	Water fern
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	Water forget-me-not

<i>Sagittaria japonica</i>	Double flowering arrowhead, Japanese arrowhead, or Old World arrowhead
<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	Giant sagittaria
<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	Giant salvinia
<i>Typha gracilis</i>	Slender Cattail
<i>Typha laxmanii</i>	Dwarf cattail or Laxman's cattail
<i>Typha minima</i>	Miniature cattail or micro-mini cattail

There are currently over 85 waterbodies in New Hampshire with known exotic plant infestations. In the late-1960s, milfoil and fanwort were the first exotic aquatic plants discovered. Since then, water chestnut, Brazilian elodea, curly-leaf pondweed, and European naiad have also been found in New Hampshire waterbodies.

#### **How did this law come about?**

Since the mid-1960s, various lakes around the state have been plagued by nuisance aquatic plants such as exotic milfoil and fanwort. Others that do not grow directly in water, but in moist habitats, such as roadsides, ditches and wetlands, have been spreading rapidly. The pretty purple flower known as purple loosestrife and the tall tufted grass known as common reed are becoming sights in the state.

To prevent the further spread of these nuisance exotic plants, NHDES drafted rules to make RSA 487:16a-b enforceable. These rules include the above-listed prohibited species that are already, or may quickly become, nuisance aquatic plants in New Hampshire. These rules are covered in chapter Env-Wq 1300 of State Administrative Rules.

#### **Why are these particular plants a problem?**

Plants that are native to a particular area have attracted a variety of predators over time, including insects, animals or pathogens (viruses/fungi), which prevent out-of-control plant growth. Exotic plants have been introduced into the state from areas that are both inside and outside of the United States. Because they are not native to the state, they have no natural predators to moderate their growth. Exotic species are thus able to flourish unchecked in any suitable habitat.

Once established in an area, exotic plants can take over large portions of the ecosystem to which they are introduced. They can cause a decrease in the aesthetic, recreational and monetary value of New Hampshire's waterbodies and can pose human health risks associated with drowning. Exotic species can also pose a threat to many native species and valuable wildlife habitats.

#### **How did these plants find their way to New Hampshire?**

There are a variety of vectors that are believed to have introduced exotic plant species into the state. Some of these sources are natural and hard to control. A natural source may include the widening of the species range due to an increase in the disturbed areas. Interstate transport of exotic plants may also occur when seed and plant pieces become attached to migrating birds and waterfowl.

Other sources revolve around human activities. The sale of aquatic plants, dumping of aquaria into waterbodies, importation of plants for distribution or research, boats, vehicles, and trailers traveling between infested and uninfested waterbodies, and even fishing lures and bait buckets with plant pieces attached can all result in the statewide spread of the nuisance exotic plants. These activities, though numerous, are more easily regulated than natural means of transport.

#### **What can be done to prevent the spread of exotic aquatic plants?**

Since the law went into effect, activities involving the prohibited plant species can be more effectively managed. To prevent the further spread of these species, always check your boats, motors, trailers, vehicles, fishing lures, bait buckets, dive gear and any other equipment that may have come into contact with any exotic plant or its

habitat. Before you launch your boat and after you pull it out of the water, make sure that you don't have any tag-along plants. Remove all plants that are attached to your boat, and remember that it is illegal to transport any plants (state-listed or otherwise) on your transient gear. Dispose of all plants away from the waterbody. Many launch sites have trash cans where you can dispose of these plants. **DON'T THROW THEM BACK IN THE WATER!**

If you are in any profession or have a hobby that puts you in contact with any exotic aquatic plants listed in the rules associated with RSA 487:16a-b, please be aware of the law. If you are a distributor or enthusiast of water garden plants, please destroy all exotic aquatic species. There are many native aquatic plants that are suitable for sale and distribution within the state, including hornwort (*Ceratophyllum*), or native waterweeds (*Elodea canadensis* or *E. nuttali*).

#### **How does one effectively destroy exotic aquatic plants?**

The best way to eliminate the threat that these plants pose is to insure that they are not able to be transported to an area where they are likely to reproduce themselves. Acceptable means of disposal include burning or incinerating (a permit may be required), land filling, desiccating, and composting (only if plants are exclusively submerged and if applied away from surface waters).

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like a copy of the law or rules, please contact the Exotic Species Program coordinator at (603) 271-2248, or visit <https://www.des.nh.gov/>, click "A-Z List" and search for "Exotic Species Program."