



# INVASIVE PLANTS OF OHIO

Fact Sheet 18

Lesser Naiad and Curly Pondweed

*Najas minor*, *Potamogeton crispus*

## LESSER NAIAD



## DESCRIPTION:

Lesser naiad is an annual aquatic plant, while curly pondweed is a perennial submerged aquatic plant.

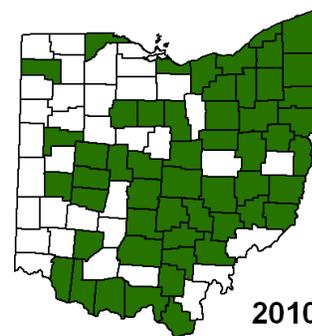
The highly-branched stems of lesser naiad can grow up to 4 feet in length and fragment easily. The leaves are coarsely toothed and the small flowers occur in clusters along the leaf axils. Lesser naiad can be confused with the native coontails (*Ceratophyllum*

spp.), but can be distinguished by the leaf arrangement. The leaves of coontail are arranged in whorls of 4 or 5, instead of the opposite arrangement of lesser naiad. The fruit is single-seeded.

Curly pondweed has oblong leaves arranged alternately on the stem. Leaf margins are wavy (resembling lasagna noodles) and have minute teeth along their entire length. The leaves remain submerged, but a flower spike rises above the water. The fruit is flat with a pointed beak.

Lesser naiad is native to Asia, northern and tropical Africa and was first collected in the United States in the 1930s. Curly pondweed originated from Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Plants were likely introduced to the United States by international ships in the mid-1800s. Both species are found throughout the United States and are widely distributed in Ohio's water bodies.

## LESSER NAIAD



## HABITAT:

Lesser naiad is most common in rivers and alkaline lakes. Curly pondweed grows in fresh and slightly brackish water and can grow in shallow, deep, still or flowing water. Both species often occur with other non-native invasive species, such as Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*).

### CURLY PONDWEED



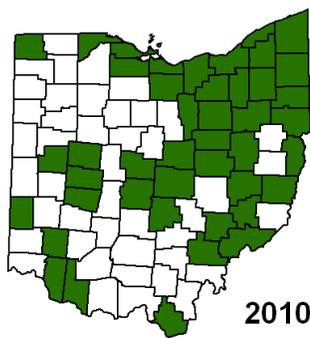
### INVASIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

Once established, lesser naiad and curly pondweed can be aggressive aquatic weeds. They grow profusely early in the season, often shading out and inhibiting the growth of native plants.

### CONTROL:

**Mechanical:** Aquatic invasive plants can be removed mechanically, but it is very labor intensive. Hand pulling can be done, although all fragments of the plant should be removed. Manual removal of lesser naiad may prove to be difficult due to the brittle nature of the plant. Avoid fragmenting the plants and remove all stems for effective control. Water level control can also be effective, depending on the time of year. Mechanical cutters and harvesters are the most common mechanical control, used in many lakes and ponds in Ohio where heavy infestations occur and impact boating and fishing.

### CURLY PONDWEED



### Chemical:

Herbicide application may be used for heavy infestations, but is only recommended when all aquatic plants can be eliminated. Aquatic herbicides usually kill all aquatic vegetation, so it is difficult to reduce impacts on native plants, if present. Selective herbicides used for aquatic vegetation control include Renovate, AM-40-Weedestroy, Diquat EProZ, and Reward.

### Biological:

No known biological control methods are currently available.

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### Credits and additional information:

Plant Conservation Alliance-Alien Plant Working Group  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources, [www.ohiodnr.gov](http://www.ohiodnr.gov)  
The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Chapter  
Invasive Plant Atlas of the United States  
OIPC website, [www.oipc.info](http://www.oipc.info)

**Note:** Maps of species' ranges are based on records as of 2010.