

WATER CHESTNUT

[*Trapa natans* L.]

TRNA



Fig. 1

UGA 5392661

Problem: Native to Eurasia,^{1,2,6} water chestnut (Fig. 1) is an aquatic weed that can dominate ponds, lakes, canals and slow moving rivers and streams.^{1,4,5} Plants form dense mats that shade-out and displace native vegetation, restrict water movement and limit navigation and recreation.^{4,5}

Habit: Rooted, freshwater aquatic,⁶ annual herb;^{1,5} possibly behaves as a perennial in parts of North America.³

Reproduction: Seed^{4,5} and vegetatively.³ Seeds sink to the hydrosol where they germinate the following season^{3,5} or can be dispersed downstream by riding on detached, buoyant floating ramets (clones).³ Ramets develop along the submerged stem and at the top of the stem and can break off and establish themselves downstream.³

Leaves: Two types (Fig. 2): submerged leaves opposite to sub-opposite, highly dissected, feathery in appearance;⁶

aerial leaves fan or diamond-shaped, glossy upper surface, hairy lower surface,⁴ toothed margins, clustered at water surface, and each attached to stem via a swollen petiole that acts as a float.^{1,2,4,6}

Stems: Submerged, cord-like (Fig. 2), to 4.8 m (16 ft.).³

Flowers: Midsummer to frost;⁴ inconspicuous,⁵



Fig. 2

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Fig. 3

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Fig. 4

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single, white, axillary, 4 petals (Fig. 3).^{2,4,6}

Fruits/seeds: Extremely sharp⁴ nut-like two-seeded drupe with 2 to 4 sharp spines or horns (Figs. 2, 4 and 5);^{1,3,4} 2½ to 4 cm (~1 to 1⁹/₁₆ in) wide.^{4,6} Caution: seeds are capable of penetrating shoe leather.⁴

Habitat: Lakes, ponds, canals, and slow-moving streams and rivers.^{1,4,5}

Similar Species: There are no other freshwater aquatic plants that can be confused with water chestnut.

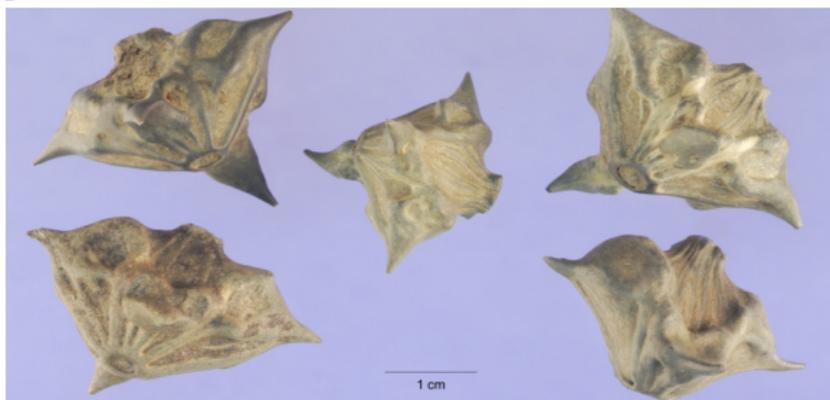


Fig. 5

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