US Army Corps
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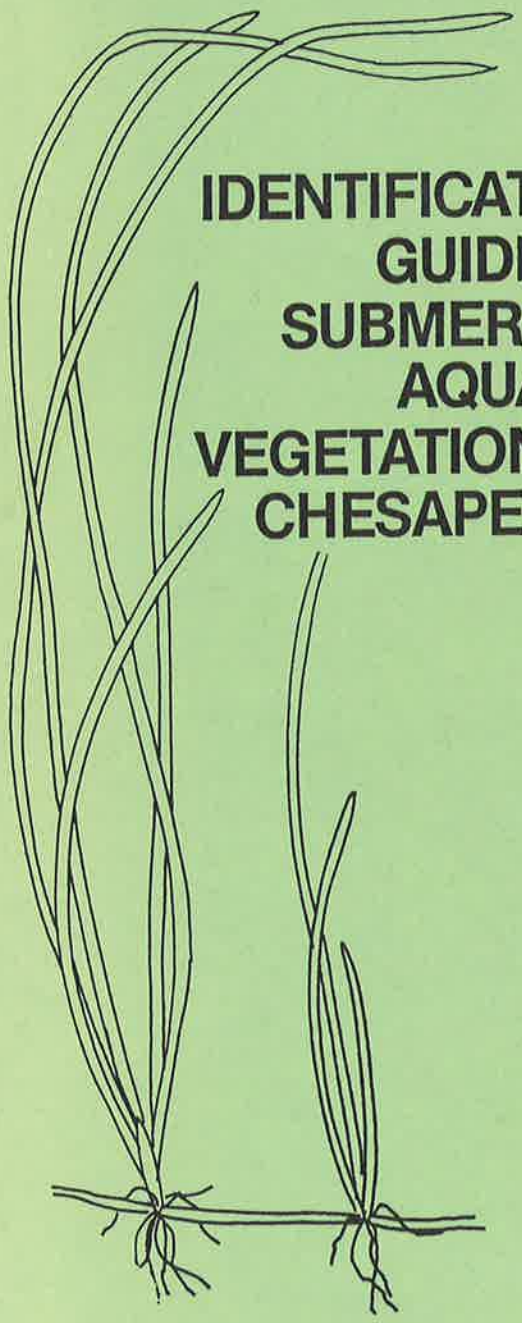


IDENTIFICATION GUIDE TO SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION OF CHESAPEAKE BAY

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

One of the Chesapeake Bay's most significant natural resources is its bay grasses, or submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). SAV provides food and habitat for fish, numerous other aquatic organisms, and waterfowl. In addition, the presence of SAV indicates good water quality and general ecological health in any section of the Bay and its tributaries.

By comparing maps of current SAV beds to those of earlier years, it will be possible to document the decline of SAV in the Bay over the last several years and to identify those areas that have shown the greatest losses. Similarly, maps of current SAV beds will enable the close monitoring of SAV increase as water quality in the Bay improves. Maps are based on aerial photography for which "ground truthing" by scientists and interested citizens can supply valuable confirmatory information.

How to Use This Guide

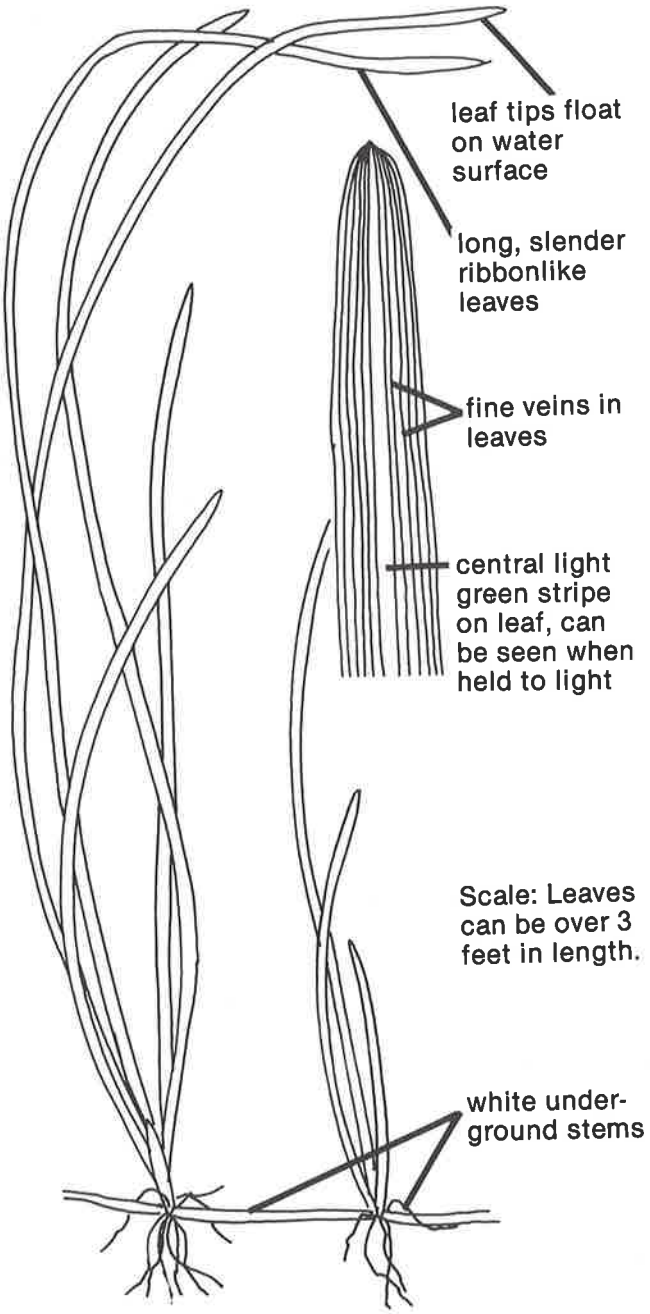
Collect a small sample from the plant you wish to identify. One or two stems should be plenty. Compare your sample with the illustrations in this guide. Prominent identification features have been indicated on each illustration.

Plants are arranged in order from those found in fresh or nearly fresh water to those found in highly brackish to marine water. Plants that are similar in appearance have been placed next to each other for ease of comparison, and distinguishing characteristics have been noted.

Each of the plants included in this guide will vary in size depending on its location and various water conditions, so scale measurements are only approximate. Actual plants may be smaller or much larger than indicated.

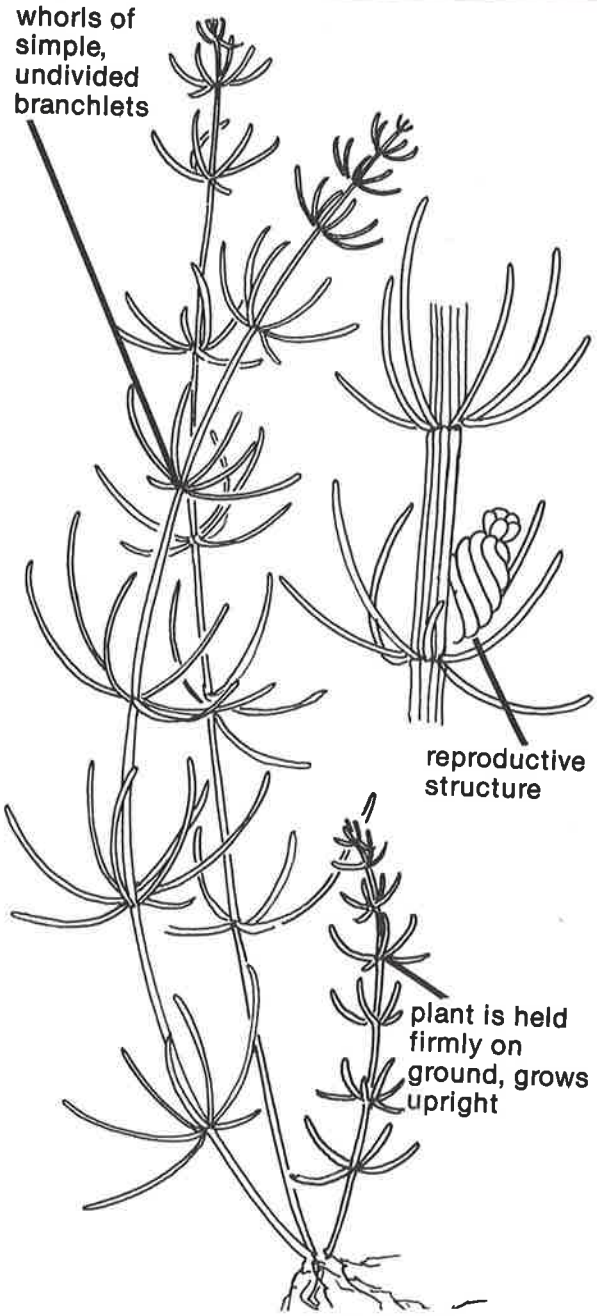
Prepared by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Annapolis, MD. Design and production by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore, MD. Illustrations by Karen Teramura.

WATER STARGRASS
Heteranthera dubia
Occurs in fresh water.



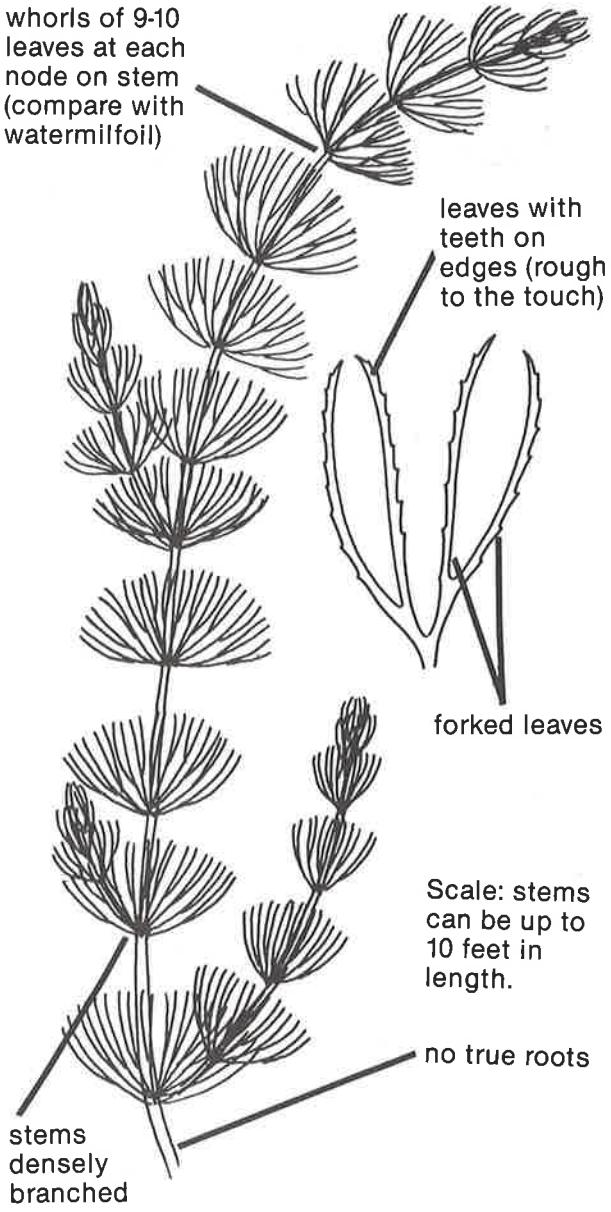
WILD CELERY
Vallisneria americana
Occurs only in fresh to slightly brackish waters.

SOUTHERN NAIAD
Najas guadalupensis
Occurs in fresh to slightly brack



MUSKGRASS
Chara sp.

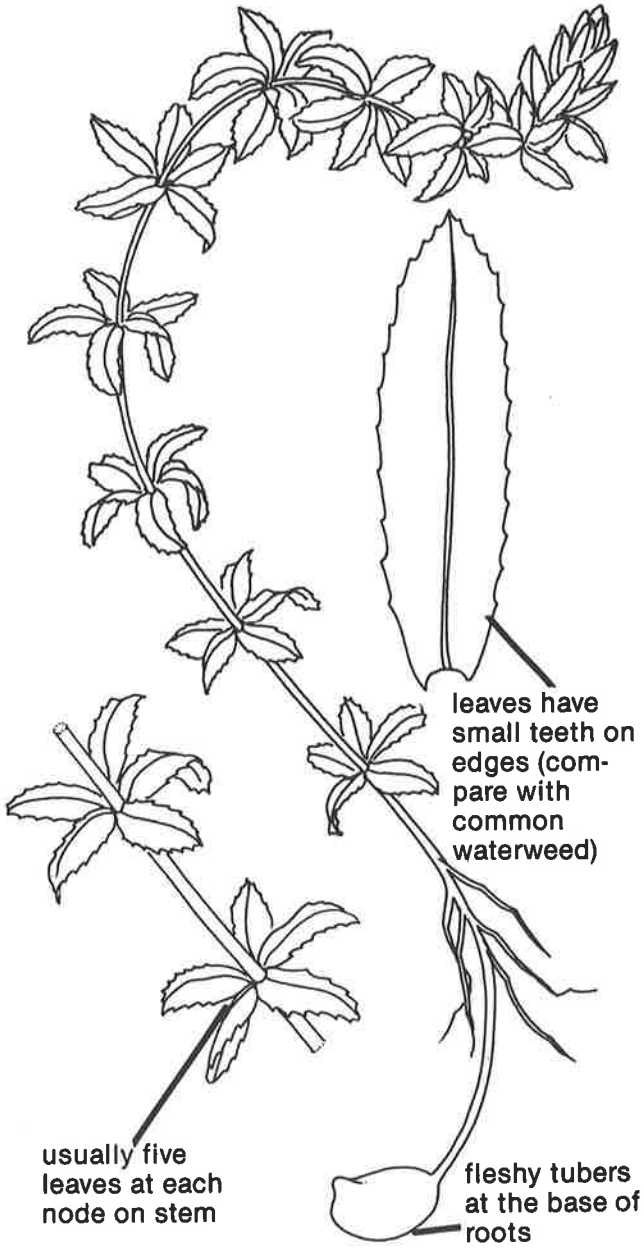
Occurs in fresh to slightly brackish water. Not a true grass, but a type of algae, or seaweed. Muskgrass is often rough to the touch and has a skunk-like odor when crushed.



COONTAIL

Ceratophyllum demersum

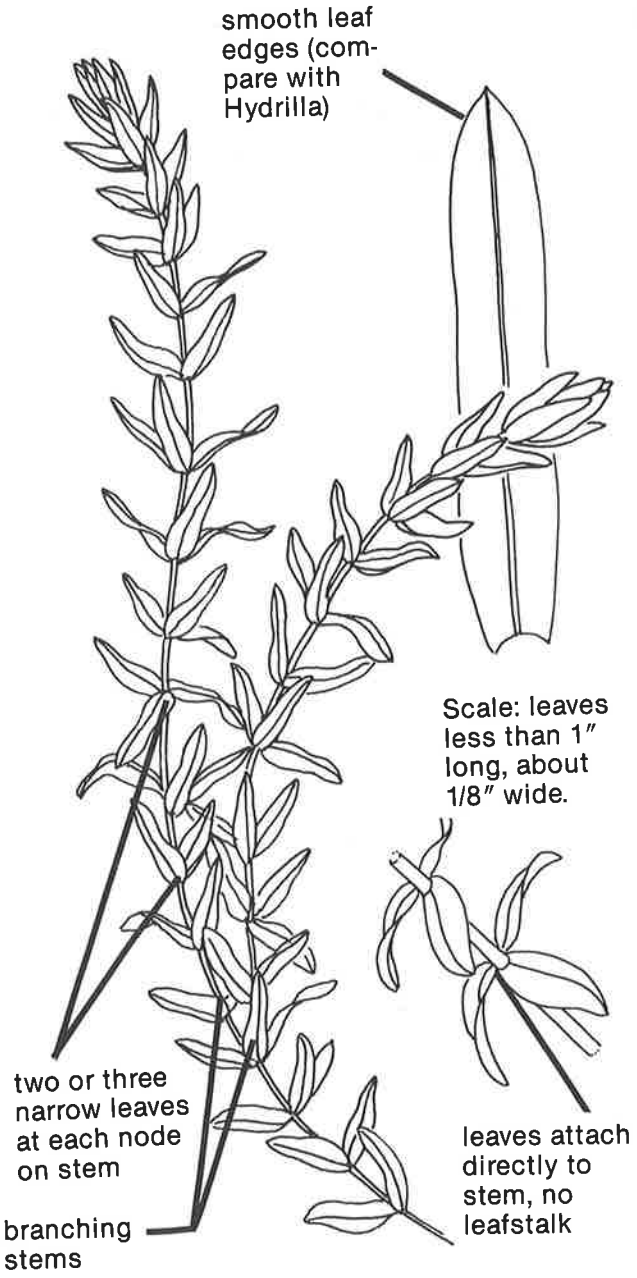
Occurs in fresh or slightly brackish water. Found in still or slow moving waters of streams. May



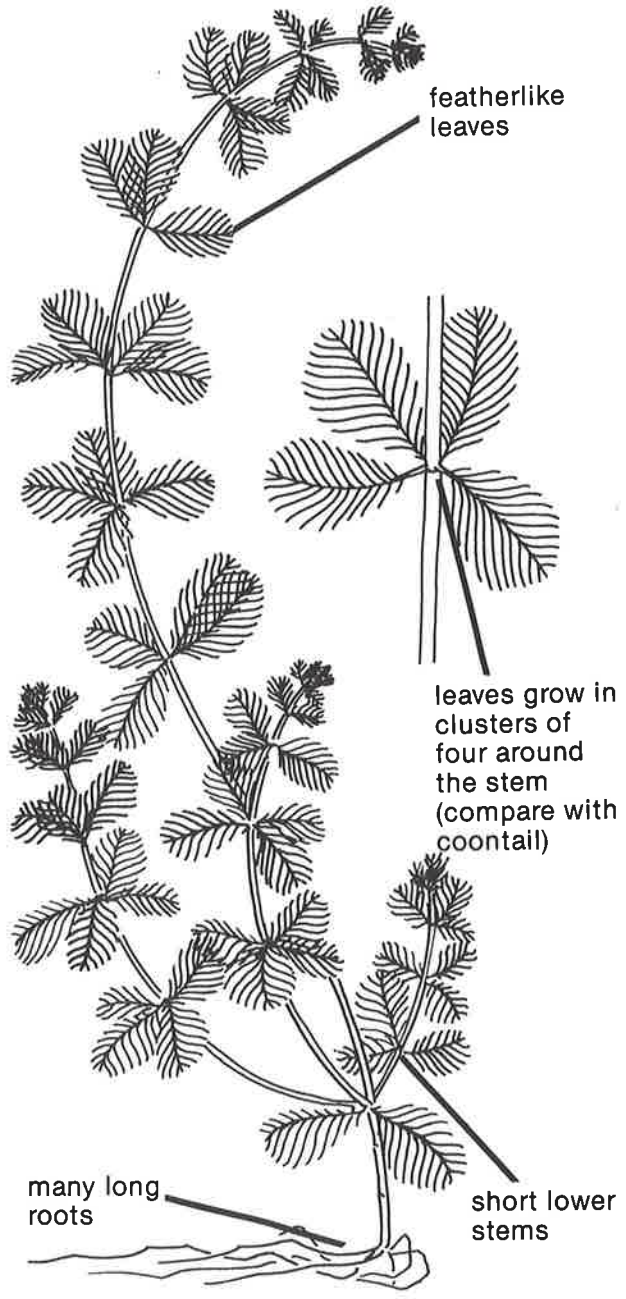
HYDRILLA

Hydrilla verticillata

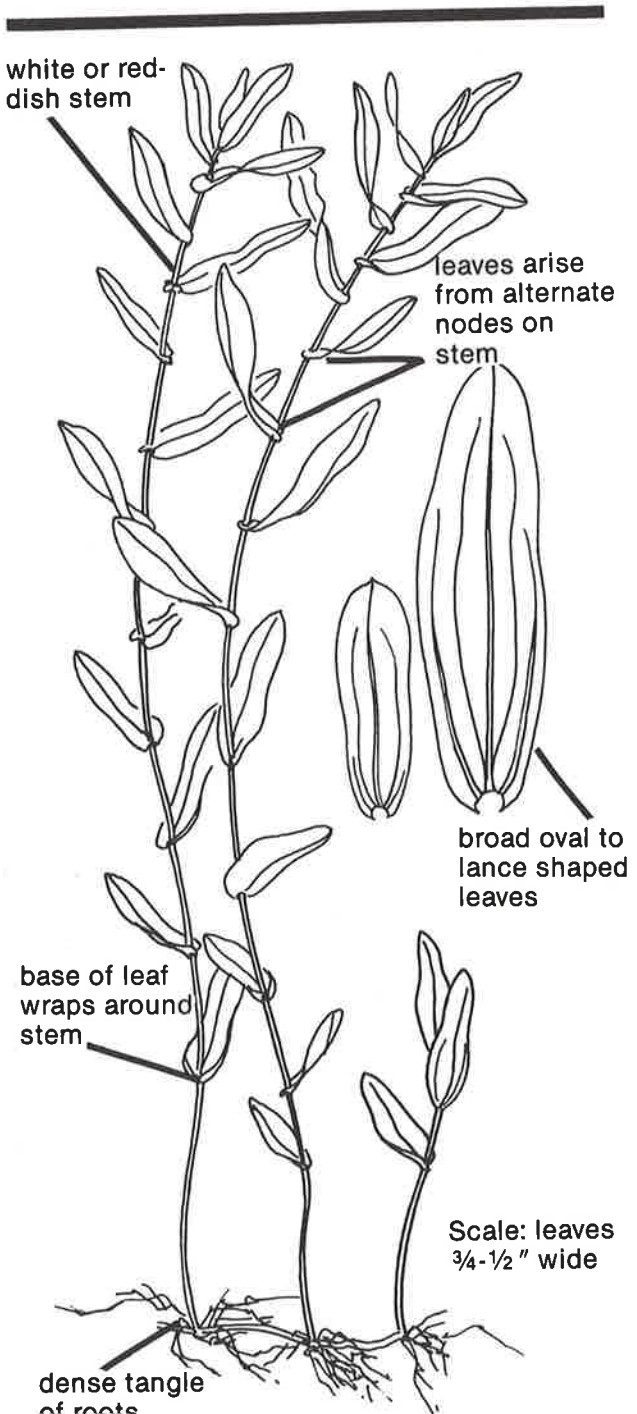
Occurs mostly in fresh to moderately brackish water. Requires little light, so can be found in murky water.



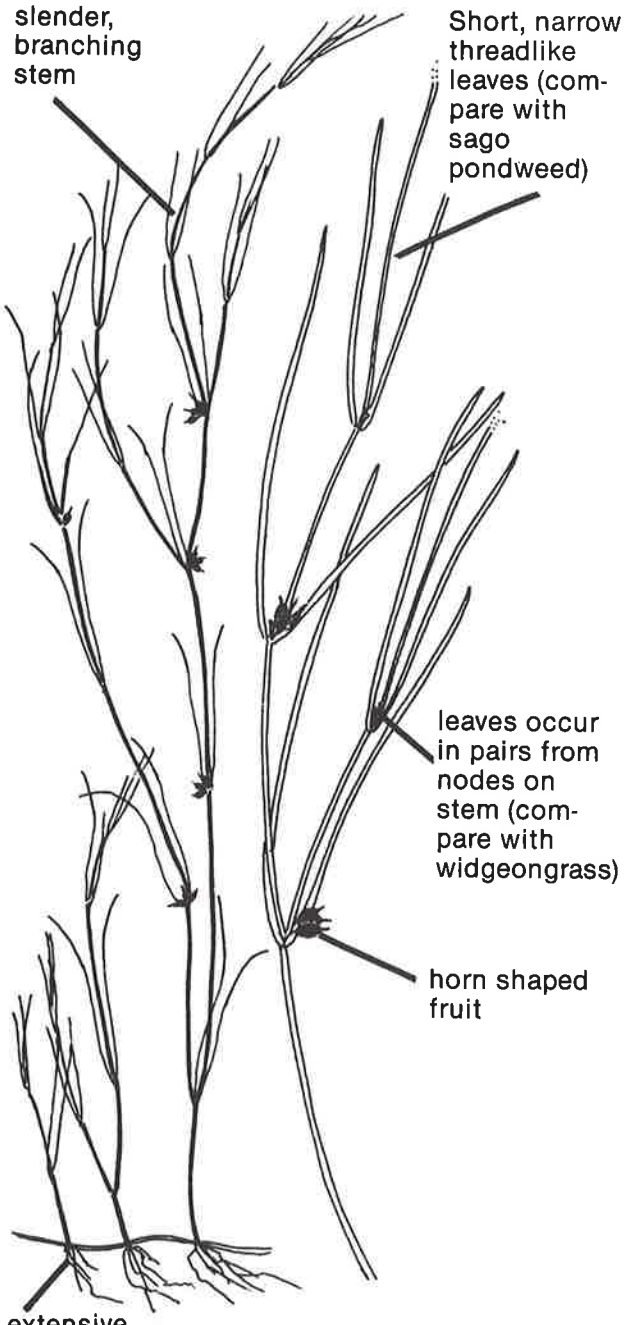
COMMON WATERWEED
Elodea canadensis
Occurs in fresh to brackish water.



EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL
Myriophyllum spicatum
Occurs in fresh to moderately brackish waters. Requires high light intensity.

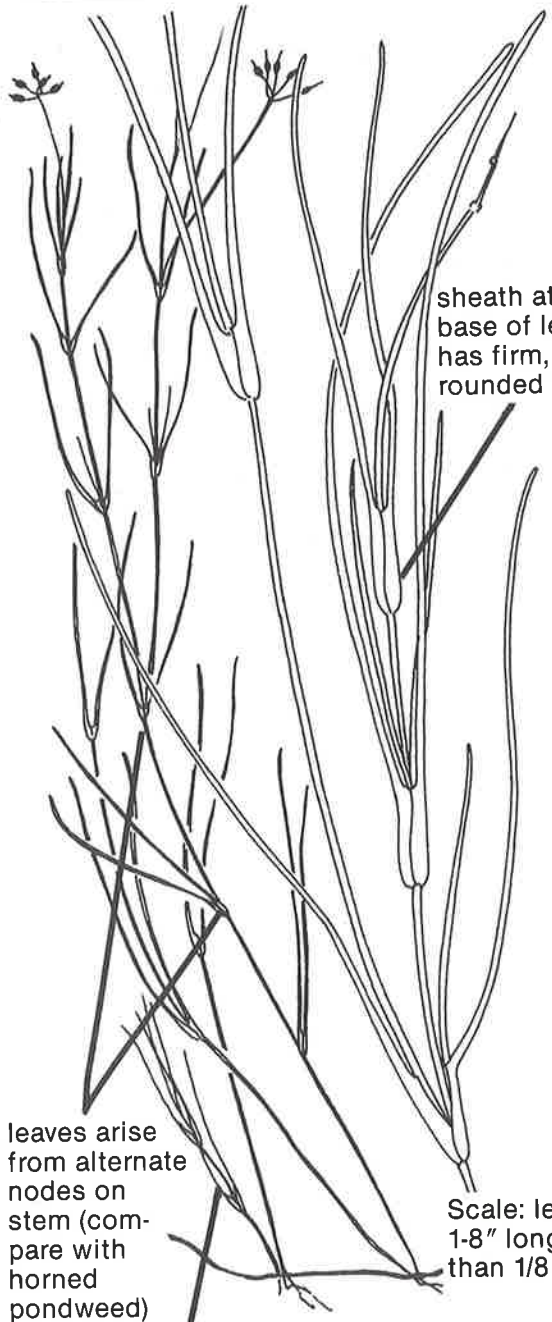

white or red-
dish stem
leaves arise
from alternate
nodes on
stem
broad oval to
lance shaped
leaves
base of leaf
wraps around
stem
Scale: leaves
¾-½" wide
dense tangle
of roots

SAGO PONDWEED
Potamogeton pectinatus
Occurs in fresh to brackish water.

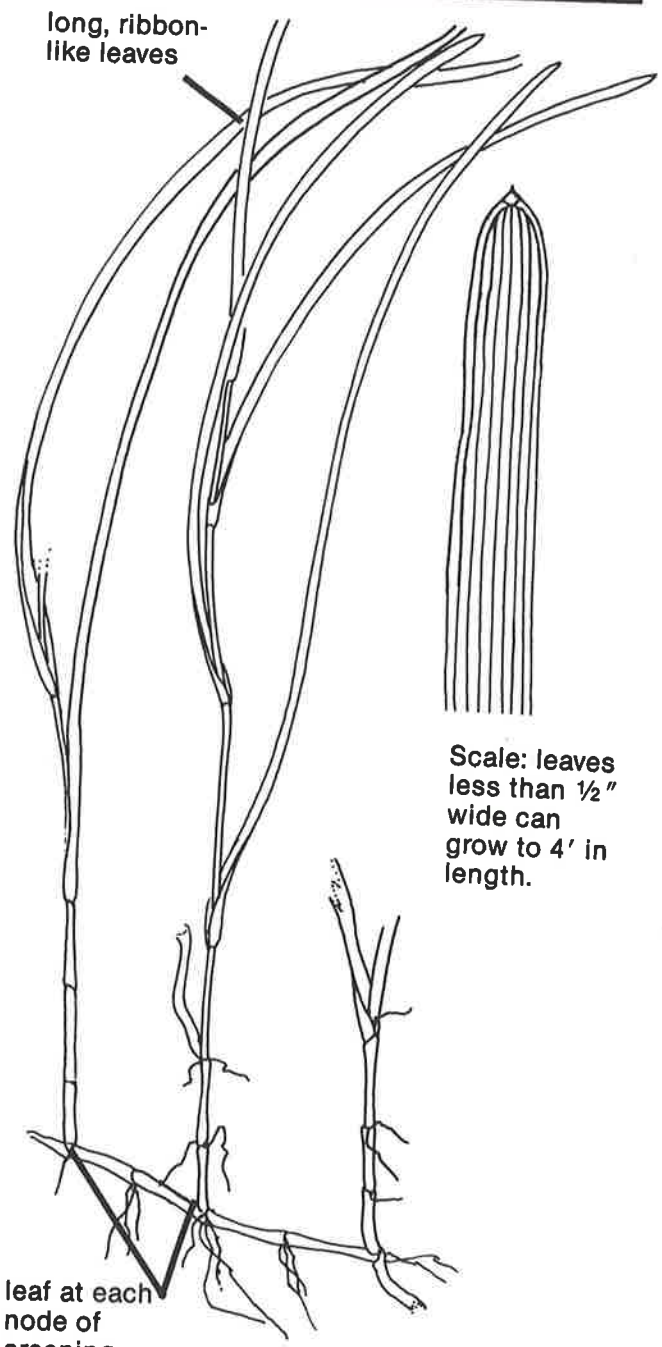


HORNED PONDWEED
Zannichellia palustris

Occurs in fresh to brackish water. Grows in late spring and often disappears by mid-summer. May show second growth period in fall.



WIDGEONGRASS
Ruppia maritima
Occurs in slightly to moderately brackish waters. Also found in high salinities with eelgrass.



EELGRASS

Zostera marina

Eelgrass is a marine plant, so it is found in the saltiest areas of