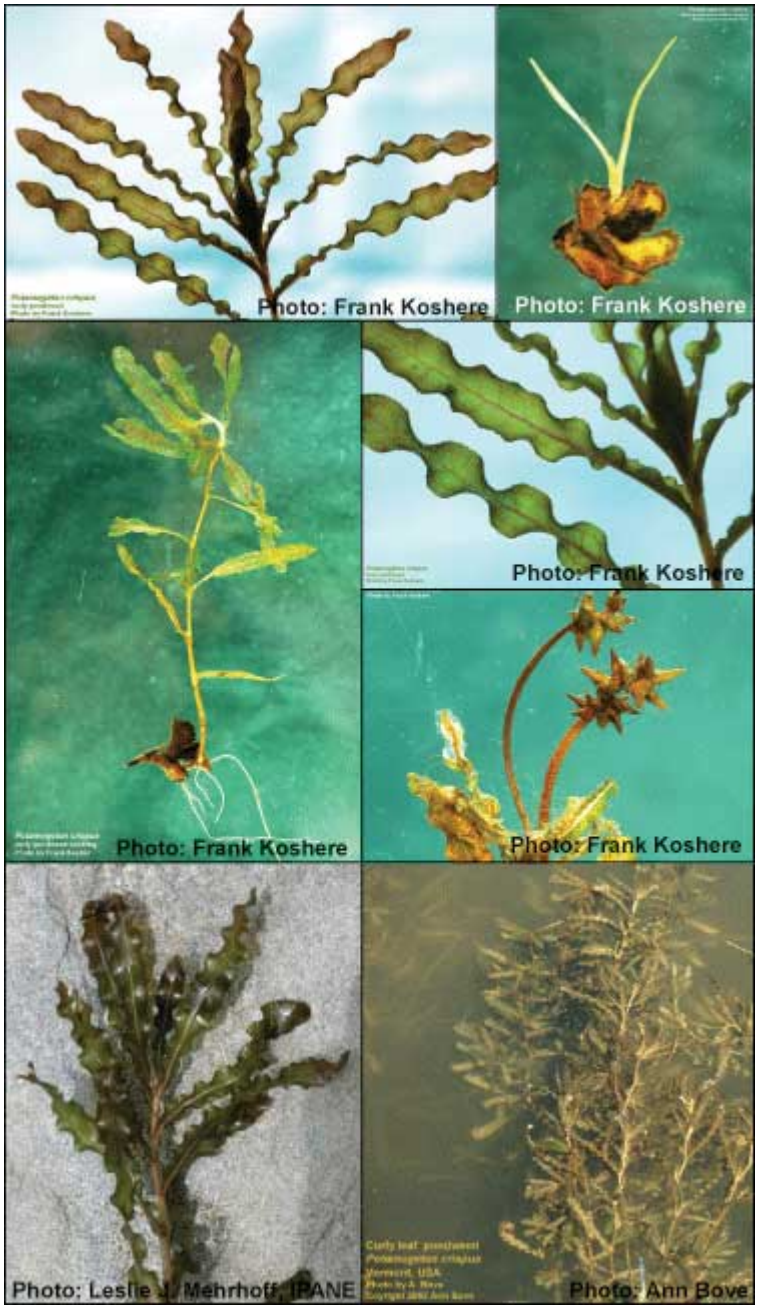
MISIN Midwest Invasive Species Information Network

Curly pondweed

Potamogeton crispus



Description

This species is listed as a restricted noxious weed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Begins growing in early spring, dies back completely by mid summer after blooming; inhibits growth of native plants; midsummer die-back results in masses of dead vegetation, increase in phosphorus levels and potential algal blooms.

Habit

Submergent aquatic perennial; ranges from 30-80 cm (1-2.5 ft) in length, forms dense mats.

Leaves

Submerged, alternate, oblong, up to 10 cm (~4 in) long and 1 cm (0.4 in) wide, rounded at the tip; slightly clasping the stem at the base, wavy leaf margins with fine teeth.

Stems

Compressed, four-angled, few branches, up to 80 cm (31 in) long and 1-2 mm wide.

Source: MISIN. 2024. Midwest Invasive Species Information Network. Michigan State University - Applied Spatial Ecology and Technical Services Laboratory. Available online at https://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail.php?id=43.

Flowers

Found on dense cylindrical spikes that rise above the water for wind pollination; bloom in late spring/early summer.

Fruits and Seeds

Small (4-6 mm long), brown, with a pointed beak.

Habitat

Found in shallow to deep water of lakes and rivers; pollution-tolerant; prefers alkaline, nutrient-rich waters.

Reproduction

Vegetatively by spindle-shaped turions (winter buds that form at leaf axils and stem tips); turions lie dormant during summer, germinate in fall; also spreads by fragmentation; seeds probably not viable.

Similar

Curly pondweed is similar to many other Potamogeton species but it is the only one with curly leaf edges.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor water bodies for new colonies in spring. Public education is critical. Raking/cutting at sediment surface in spring can prevent propagule formation - remove all fragments. Herbicide applications at low rates in early spring provide effective control; plants die back completely by late spring or early summer so later application ineffective; where water levels can be manipulated, fall drawdown may kill turions. Permits are usually required for herbicide use in water bodies and wetlands. For information see MDEQs Aquatic Nuisance Control website at: https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_3681_3710---,00.html

Credits

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) has partnered with MISIN to provide the information

in this fact sheet. Species images and/or information were used with permission from "A Field Identification Guide to Invasive Plants in Michigan's Natural Communities" and "A Field Guide to Invasive Plants of Aquatic and Wetland Habitats for Michigan.

Source: MISIN. 2024. Midwest Invasive Species Information Network. Michigan State University - Applied Spatial Ecology and Technical Services Laboratory. Available online at https://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail.php?id=43.