

## Frequently asked questions

### What do I do if I find EWM?

Collect a sample and mark the location where the specimen was found. Contact your local DNR and/or AIS Coordinator to assist in verifying the EWM, and offer advice before any action is taken. They can also inform you of other experts that are available.

### How do I preserve the specimen?

Place the specimen in a zipper-style bag with a moist paper towel. Keep the specimen refrigerated until it is delivered or mailed to your local DNR Water Resource Specialist or AIS Coordinator.

### What is manual removal? Is it legal?

#### Do I need a permit?

Manual removal is pulling by hand or with hand-held devices that do not use external or auxiliary power sources (e.g. small rakes). It is legal if the native plant population is not excessively harmed. No permit is needed when following these guidelines. Contact with the local DNR is always recommended before starting.

### What if EWM is mixed in with native plants, what should I do?

Try to target only the EWM. If native plants are accidentally removed, dispose of them with the EWM. This prevents losing any EWM fragments that might be mixed in with the native plant material. The more native plants you can leave, the better chance they will spread and help prevent any EWM from becoming reestablished in that area.

### Where do I dispose of EWM?

Contacting your local DNR Water Resource Specialist prior to the project is always recommended for the latest approved procedures. Transport the material away from the water body so that no parts escape, and dispose of it in a manner that prevents the establishment, introduction, or spread of the plants. All pulled EWM must be disposed of above the ordinary high water mark, preferably in a flat, vegetated area so the EWM fragments cannot wash back into a nearby water body. Compost piles, farm fields, gardens, and landfills are good places.

### What kind of equipment do I need?

- (Optional) snorkeling gear: mask, fins, snorkel (a dive flag is needed if more than 150 feet from shore)
- Small rake, trowel or similar tools
- Temporary buoys (fishing buoys) for EWM locations
- Container to put harvested EWM for transport & disposal (have a predetermined disposal place)
- Bag made with small mesh or burlap to put collected EWM while working away from the watercraft
- Watercraft to work out of & place harvested EWM
- Long-handled, small-mesh net for catching fragments
- Wetsuits aren't necessary but do keep divers warmer & allows them to work longer with more comfort
- A means to haul the harvested EWM to a disposal site
- Record progress & successes. Record hours & participants for future reference & to document needed volunteer hours towards grant match funds.



EWM Collection



### Making EWM Collection Bags

#### Materials:

- ◆ Fine mesh laundry bags and/or burlap sacks
- ◆ 10 - 12 inch zip ties (amount varies on size of bag)
- ◆ Foam water noodles (wacky noodles)

#### Directions:

- ◆ Cut the foam water noodle to the diameter of the bag or sack being used.
- ◆ Making a circle with the foam, place the foam inside the bag at the open end and attach with the zip ties to create a floating lip at the opening of the bag (see above pictures). You now have a floating collection bag for the EWM that lets the water strain out when it is time to dispose of the EWM.

## Eurasian Water Milfoil Manual Removal



### ◆ What Is It?

### ◆ How To Do It

### ◆ Helpful Tips



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 With assistance from the WDNRAIS Grants Program and UW Extension Lakes Program  
 Photos by Chris Hamerla, Paul Skawinski, Russ Robinson, & Tiffany Lyden

**Identification** & quick response to EWM is essential. On new, small colonies and scattered plants, hand removal can be a simple, effective way to control EWM. EWM is distinguished from northern water milfoil by having 12 to 21 pairs of leaflets on each leaf (see milfoil leaf pictures far right). Typically, EWM also has limp, pinkish stems, while northern water milfoil tends to have whitish stems, and leaves with 4 to 12 pairs of leaflets.

**Manage** EWM in spring. Generally, EWM will grow quicker than native plants so it is easier to locate and remove. At this time, most native plants are still dormant, so the EWM is more visible. Also, the plants are younger and stronger, so they don't break apart as easily as later in the season. Eliminating fragmentation is a top priority.

**Mark** EWM locations after finding it from a boat or by snorkeling so it can be found again quickly for removal. A GPS unit works great, as does a map of the lake marked with EWM locations. Mapping also helps for future reference to see if EWM is showing up in different places and how effective past removal efforts have been. This map can also assist a lake consultant brought in to perform more in-depth surveying.

**Remove** EWM carefully. All portions of the plant, including roots and pieces that break off, need to be removed. Grabbing numerous stems on the same plant reduces breaking from the roots. Bigger plants or firmer sediment require the person to work their fingers/hands into the sediment to help loosen the plant. Slowly remove the plant from the sediment and gently shake it to reduce sediments clouding the water. Carefully wind the plant

around a hand to help eliminate lost fragments, and to allow for easier transition to the container.

In shallow water, a stable watercraft can be used to work from and minimize sediment disruption, especially when dealing with soft substrates like silt, mud, or marl. The removed plants can be transferred right into the watercraft or other container.

**Snorkeling** is a good option in shallow water. Using a watercraft is still helpful as it gives the diver a place to deposit removed EWM and to rest. The people in the watercraft can point out plants to the diver and help retrieve fragments (long-handled nets with a fine mesh work well).

The diver can put plants into a mesh or burlap bag that keeps fragments from escaping, or bring the plants directly to the watercraft. To maximize the time spent harvesting EWM, a bag or similar floating container should stay with the diver for depositing plants. Once it is full, it can be taken to the watercraft to be emptied. The watercraft needs to remain at a safe distance to give the diver room to work. Non-motorized watercraft work well since they aren't as likely to disrupt the sediment, and there isn't the danger from the propeller.

Calm, sunny days offer the best working conditions regardless of the removal technique. Visibility is greater, plus boat positioning and control is much easier.

**Disposal** of harvested plants should be planned in advance. Gardens, flower beds, and farm fields are great places, as aquatic plants make good fertilizer. Care needs to be taken to prevent escape and introduction of fragments into new areas. Drain excess water to reduce weight during transport.



Eurasian water milfoil



Eurasian water milfoil (left)  
 Northern water milfoil (right)



Watercraft assistants



Making a difference!

**Additional Information:**

Golden Sands RC&D  
<http://www.goldensandsrccd.org/>  
 (715) 343-6215

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
[www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives)

UW Extension Lakes Program  
[www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/)

**EWM Removal Video**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfsEDyAwOP4>