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EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL MANAGEMENT TIPS

Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM), a member of the Watermilfoil family, is an aquatic perennial with numerous roots at the base and along the stem. Female flowers lack petals and are found on the lower half of the flower spike. Male flowers are pink and are on the upper half of the flower spike. The leaves usually have more than 14 leaflet pairs and are whorled around the stem. EWM can have negative impacts on native aquatic vegetation, waterfowl, some mammals, fish and water quality. Dense mats of EWM can reduce dissolved oxygen levels, impede water flow, and clog industrial, agricultural and drinking water supplies.



Prevention is the most important goal in any integrated management strategy, especially in Montana where invasion of EWM is relatively recent. Recreationists, anglers and boaters should clean their boats, trailers, watercraft and other equipment and inspect all equipment for plant fragments before entering another body of water. EWM can stay alive in bilge water and on equipment for many days.

Effective control measures for the management of Eurasian watermilfoil include:

- 1. Mechanical (hand pulling):** Hand pulling and diver operated suction dredges are options for small infestations but will have to be repeated as the plants grow back. Bottom barriers have also been used around docks and boat ramps to kill or reduce EWM. As sediment accumulates to about 1.5 inches on the barriers, they will have to be cleaned to prevent fragments from taking root. Water drawdown followed by freezing temperatures for 96 hours will kill plants and reduce infestations.
- 2. Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law! In Montana, a 308 permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality is required to intentionally apply aquatic herbicides to water.** Herbicides can be used in some circumstances to control EWM, but applying herbicides to surface water safely and effectively requires specialized knowledge and training. Aquatic herbicides usually require two or more hours of contact time with the plant and therefore are ineffective in flowing water.