

Invasive Aquatic Plant Identification Protocol

Vernon's lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are inspected regularly by both professional and volunteer surveyors for the presence of invasive aquatic plants. Equally important, however, is monitoring by people who use our waterways on a daily basis. The following protocol can be used by residents, fishermen and boaters and to determine if suspicious plants are non-native or invasive and pose a threat to the health of our natural resources or to recreational safety.

These guidelines can be used in conjunction with published descriptions of problem plants. Information about invasive species can be found at: [Connecticut's Aquatic and Wetland Invasive Plant Identification Guide Bulletin 2nd Ed. Bulletin 1035](#). Public plant identification training sessions are also sponsored periodically by State and municipal resource agencies – watch local newspapers for announcements.

If you find an aquatic plant that you suspect is non-native or invasive, it may be submitted to professional taxonomists to confirm its identification. Follow the steps below to ensure the most accurate determination:

1. Spread the plant on a piece of white paper, labeled in pencil with your name and the date and location of collection. Make sure that characteristic features are visible. Placing the paper and plant in a tray with a thin film of water may help to arrange it.
2. Send a photograph of the plant sample to Vernon Parks & Recreation Dept. Director Bruce Dinnie at bdinnie@vernon-ct.gov
3. Record the following information on a separate sheet of paper:
 - Collector's name, address, phone number and/or email address.
 - The date the plant was found.
 - The location where the plant was found.
 - Whether the plant was 1) rooted in that location, 2) loosely floating, or 3) washed ashore.
 - Whether there was a sizable population of the plant in that location.
 - Any additional information.
4. Refrigerate the sample in a ziploc bag containing enough water to keep it moist. Label the bag with your name and the date and location of collection.
5. You will be notified if the plant has been identified from your photograph. If further examination is required for identification, you will be asked to deliver the refrigerated sample to the Vernon Parks & Recreation Dept. Office at 120 South Street (Henry Park).
6. If the plant is determined to be an invasive species, you will be asked to submit the information sheet.
7. If the plant is not invasive, the sample and information sheet may be discarded.