



Ceratophyllum demersum

coon's tail, hornwort

Family Ceratophyllaceae

Origin Native

WIS Code OBL CoC 5

DESCRIPTION

This submerged aquatic perennial lacks roots but is sometimes found buried in soft mucky water bottoms. Stiff branching stems (1 to 2 m long) with opposite leaves circle the stem. The leaves project a feathery appearance under water. Teeth along the leaf margins are easily seen and evenly spaced.

FLOWERS AND FRUITS

July to September. Single flowers are found in the leaf axils (where leaf meets stem). Fruits are oval and 4-7 mm long with three spines. Vegetative reproduction is common with this species, as stem pieces break off from the main plant and float to new locations to grow and spread.

HABITAT

Slow moving streams and ponds. It can sometimes be a nuisance in farm ponds from overabundance.

SIMILAR SPECIES

The aquatic genus *Myriophyllum*, water milfoil, has four species (one is non-native) found in West Virginia. The stems and leaves have the same feathery look underwater as *Ceratophyllum demersum*, but a close peek at the leaves shows a compound leaf pattern giving each leaf a comb-like look.



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Ceratophyllum demersum

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Myriophyllum sp.

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