## Parrot Feather (Myriophyllum aquaticum)

Also known as Brazilian watermilfoil and parrot feather watermilfoil. Prohibited noxious weed in Washington and other Western States.

**Threat:** Parrot feather seriously alters the physical and chemical characteristics of lakes and streams • Infestations alter aquatic ecosystems by shading out algae and providing choice mosquito larvae habitat • Dense infestations also cause flooding and drainage problems and can restrict recreational activities.

**Description:** Feather-like leaves arranged around the stem in whorls of four to six • Leaves form both underwater and above water • Easily mistaken for Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) • Stems and leaves can grow up to a foot above the water surface and look almost like small fir trees.

**History:** Native to South America • Introduced in the late 1800s to the Washington D.C. area.

**Spread:** Attractive and easy to cultivate, it is used widely in indoor and outdoor aquaria and water gardens where it has escaped cultivation • Regenerates from plant fragments • Can be transported long distances out of water on boat trailers, etc.

**Control:** Difficult to control, even with herbicides • Best control options are preventing spread and eradicating small populations • Mechanical controls such mowing or harvesting should be used cautiously because they can enhance the rate of spread • rhizomes can survive over winter out of water or at low water levels buried in the sediment • Grass carp and other grazers find parrot feather unpalatable due to high tannin content.





**Alternatives:** There are no good alternatives to parrotfeather. • Never release any aquarium or water garden plants in natural areas • Do not design ponds or water features that drain into natural water bodies such as streams, lakes or wetlands because plants, seeds, plant fragments, etc. can be transported into these systems.

## For more information:

Western Aquatic Plant Management Society- www.wapms.org/plants/parrotfeather.html
Washington Department of Ecology- www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/weeds/aqua003.html
University of Florida, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants- http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/myaqpic.html

