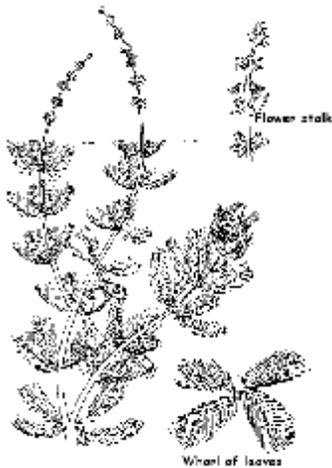




# HELP CONTROL THE SPREAD OF EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL!

Do you want to continue to enjoy your favourite water sports and activities?  
Your cooperation is key to maintaining the quality of Lac Notre-Dame

Over the last few years, buoys (blue plastic bottles) have been springing up on the lake to mark the presence of Eurasian watermilfoil — an invasive aquatic plant that spreads with lightening speed from one year to the next. While this weed has been visible for the last three years, fields of it can now be found in the middle of the lake and in a number of bays.



## What is Eurasian watermilfoil?

Originating in Europe, Eurasian watermilfoil is an invasive aquatic plant that grows at depths of 1 to 4 metres [but may sometimes also be found in water as deep as 10 metres] and forms a dense carpet on the lake's surface. According to Environment Canada, "this plant not only pushes out indigenous plant species, but may also be harmful to fish populations by crowding out their spawning grounds... Eurasian watermilfoil is also an impediment to recreational use of aquatic environments."

## How does Eurasian watermilfoil spread?

Once introduced into a lake, Eurasian watermilfoil can take over all shallow areas. Primarily, it spreads:

- when cut stems are deposited in an area conducive to their survival (propagation by cutting)
- by its spiked flowers that can be seen when the plant breaks the surface
- naturally throughout the summer as the stems grow roots, break off from the "mother plant", and eventually sink to the bottom to colonize uninfested areas.

Every stem is able to produce as many as twenty new plants allowing the weed to spread at lightening speed. With the help of motorboats, an infested area may quadruple in size in a single year (as we have observed over the course of the last two years).

## Why is it a hazard?

- Fishing, sailing and the use of motorboats become unviable.
- Water skiing and swimming should be avoided in infested areas as there is a risk of entanglement and drowning.
- Propellers may become entangled, overheat and burnout.
- Property values may fall.

## How can you slow the spread?

- Stop sediments from entering the lake (maintain the natural vegetation along the shoreline or restore degraded shorelines).

- Reduce the amounts of pollutants entering the lake (ensure proper septic systems; use phosphate-free products; do not use fertilizers or pesticides).
- Control the watermilfoil population by minimizing plant fragmentation. Avoid circulating in areas of the lake infested with the plant (the worst of which are surrounded by buoys) and in shallow areas (where the plant may be present but not yet visible).

#### What's the best control intervention?

Over the years, a number of methods have been developed to try to control Eurasian watermilfoil or to eliminate it completely. These include, mechanical harvesters, manipulation of water levels to expose the weed to freezing, weeding by hand, installing screens on the lake bottom (Aquascreen), chemical treatments, biological controls, aerogenerators, aerators, Speece Cones and others.

While manual weeding and aerogenerators have been recommended by some, they both present a major problem: they may disturb the lake sediments creating conditions favourable to an algae bloom.

The Notre-Dame and Usher Lakes Association (formed in August, 2004), has undertaken intensive research and has identified an expert on Eurasian watermilfoil – Paul Hamilton from the Research Department at the Canadian Museum of Nature. According to Mr. Hamilton, harvesting the plant once the spikes are above the water's surface (late spring and early autumn) is the most promising and least environmentally damaging method of controlling the weed. This technique will gradually weaken the plant and create conditions suitable for the return of indigenous plants.

Having obtained the required license from the government, the Notre-Dame and Usher Lakes Association will begin a pilot project to harvest the Eurasian watermilfoil according to a well-defined protocol.

The first harvest will take place in June 2005

The second harvest will take place in September or October 2005

The boats involved in the harvest will be marked with a red flag

While the work is underway, please stay away from the boats involved in the harvest so that the teams are able to collect all plant pieces.

For more information on the project, please consult the Association's previous Newsletter or visit the website:

[www.magma.ca/~roblynn/htm/lac\\_notre-dame.html](http://www.magma.ca/~roblynn/htm/lac_notre-dame.html)

If you would like to join the Association or would like more information, please contact:

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#### What can I do immediately for little or no cost?

Strictly follow these control measures:

- Do not use soap, shampoo and all other cleaning products in the lake or other waterways
- Avoid all areas marked with buoys
- les embarcations à moteurs et les pédalos devraient se limiter aux zones profondes du lac
- (I have a big problem with this one – it has the outcome of directing boats to the bay)
- Maintain the natural vegetation along the shoreline and restore degraded shorelines
- Reduce the amounts of pollutants entering the lake (ensure proper septic systems; use phosphate-free products; do not use fertilizers or pesticides)
- Wash all boats that have been used in other lakes and waterways BEFORE launching them in Lac Notre Dame (to avoid a new infestation)

- Wash all boats, propellers, and trailers AWAY from the water when going from one lake to another to avoid additional infestations and never throw plant pieces removed from your boat etc. into the lake or other waterways.