

# Invasive non-native species ID

## Two leaf (variable) water milfoil

**Two leaf (variable) water milfoil—*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*. Not yet established in the UK but present in Europe**

Freshwater aquatic plant that is native to North America. Often dispersed through the ornamental aquatic plant trade.

Also known as “various-leaved water milfoil”

It is often found in slow-flowing or still water systems.

This plant can develop into dense mats that prevent water circulation, reduce light and outcompete native species.

Leaves can fragment and regenerate, easily happens when disturbed

In total there are 50 *Myriophyllum* species. Several are traded and it can be very difficult to distinguish between species, so seeking expert guidance in identification is recommended.



Photo credit: J. L. C. H. van Valkenburg

Submerged mat of *M. heterophyllum*



Photo credit: B. Kieft

Submerged form of *M. heterophyllum*



Photo credit: J.L.C.H. van Valkenburg

Emergent form of *M. heterophyllum* growing in a toothed spike



Photo credit: V. van der Neut

There are significant differences in morphology between emergent and submerged forms of *M. heterophyllum*, as illustrated.

### Identification

This plant is an evergreen perennial.

This species may be mistaken for other water-milfoils (*Myriophyllum* spp.). It is best recognised by its dense growth underwater and the undivided, serrate, whorled leaves.

It has submerged and emergent leaf forms. Submerged leaves are feather-like. Emergent leaves can be variable in form, but often seen growing in a toothed spike.

Green stems, often with a reddish tinge.

Though rarely observed flowering, it normally flowers between June and September with red flowers on emergent stems. It's main method of reproduction and dispersal is through asexual fragmentation.