



# Whatcom Weeds

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## EUROPEAN FROG-BIT

*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*

**THREAT:** European frog-bit, a native of Europe, has been found in one location in Washington State, and is present in the eastern United States and Canada. This plant can form dense mats of intertwined leaves and roots, impacting native fish and wildlife, wetland function, navigation and water flow. European frog-bit grows in still and slow-moving shallow waters, such as ponds, ditches and wetlands. It spreads by seed and vegetatively, through stolons and turions. The plant can be moved by water, animals and boating equipment. Although seed production may be limited in some populations, turion production can be quite high. European frog-bit is on the Washington State quarantine list, making it illegal to buy, sell or transport this plant in Washington.

**DESCRIPTION:** European frog-bit is a perennial free-floating aquatic plant, with leathery heart-shaped leaves that resemble miniature water lily pads. The leaves, about the size of a quarter, grow in rosettes along long creeping stems. Rosettes will break off from the original plant, forming new plants. Small, white 3-petaled flowers are produced in early summer, growing on a stalk above the water. Turions (buds) are produced in the fall. After dropping to the substrate, the turions overwinter, then float to the surface and sprout the following spring. The plant has a well-developed, fibrous root system, which can grow up to a foot in length. The roots usually do not attach to the substrate, but often intertwine with roots of other plants.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** There is little information on the control of European frog-bit. As with all aquatic weeds, control is difficult and eradication may be unrealistic. To prevent the spread of aquatic plants, all plant material should be removed from boating and recreational equipment before moving to another water body. If removing plants using mechanical means, care must be taken to remove all roots, stolons and plant pieces from the water. Contact the weed control board for site-specific recommendations.