# Water chestnut (Trapa natans)

Family name: Water chestnut (Trapaceae)

## Native range: Eurasia

**NJ Status:** Emerging Stage 2 – Uncommon (may be regionally common or abundant). It is *highly threatening* to natural communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

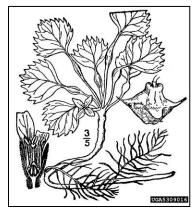
## **General description:**

- Rooted aquatic
- Annual—after frost plants die
- Mat-forming
- Easily hand-pulled
- Displays explosive growth



#### Leaves:

- Floating rosette of <u>triangular</u>, <u>sharply toothed</u> leaves, 0.75"-1.5" long
- Stems up to 6" long with <u>swollen</u> portions that give buoyancy
- Prominently veined with short, stiff hairs below
- <u>Feathery submerged leaves</u> up to 6" long, opposite or nearly so





Enlarged stems give buoyancy

## Flowers:

- Tiny, white, 4 petals
- Appear in center of the rosette
- Blooms from July until a killing frost

### Fruit:

- Submerged, 1" wide <u>nut-like structures with 4</u>
  <u>barbed spines</u>
- Ripening in August until a killing frost
- Viable for up to 12 years
- Spines can pierce paws of pets and wildlife, as well as the feet of swimmers
- Dispersed by water current, boats, and wildlife



- Current year's seeds- green and attached to underside of plant
- Past year's seeds (not viable)- black and floating



## Habitat:

- Ponds, lakes, rivers, streams
- Most often found in slow-moving, nutrient rich waters
- Decay of plant material can deplete oxygen for fish and other organisms

Commercial availability: Not found

Look-alikes: None



