

**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 triangular, sharply toothed leaves, 0.75"-1.5" long
- Stems up to 6" long with swollen portions that give buoyancy
- Prominently veined with short, stiff hairs below
- Feathery submerged leaves 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 nut-like structures with 4 barbed spines
- 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

