

Duckweed Fact Sheet

What is it?

Duckweed is a member of the *Lemnaceae* family. Types commonly found in Minnesota include *Lemna*, *Spirodela*, and *Wolffia*. From a distance, duckweed is often mistaken for algae; it may form a thick, green blanket on the water surface.

Duckweed growths may be considered unsightly but post no known human or environmental health risk. It is a popular food source for ducks. Additionally, if floating duckweed is gently pushed aside, the water underneath is generally quite clear.

Duckweed is native to Minnesota and commonly found in quiet or slow moving water. It is more prevalent in warmer months and dies back when temperatures cool. Growths of duckweed are easily moved about by wind or wave action and often collect along shorelines.

Algae may also contribute to a green appearance of a lake or pond. Although algae is typical of Minnesota waterbodies, it can reach nuisance levels. Some species of algae can be harmful when they produce toxins. If in doubt, it's best to keep people and pets from contact with the water. More information about harmful algal blooms is available on the Minnesota Department of Health webpage at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/hab



Duckweed covering the surface of a small pond in Edina.



Duckweed is a collective term that refers to a number of small aquatic plants. *Lemna* has small roots and multiple leaves (left). The image on the right shows *Lemna* plus *Wolffia*, also called watermeal, which are smaller with only one leaf and no roots.

What can be done to control duckweed?

Per the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, the City does not participate in control of duckweed.

Duckweed is difficult to control because it is mobile, easily reintroduced by waterfowl, and prolific. However, if residents wish to control duckweed, there are two primary strategies;

- Chemical destruction with an aquatic herbicide to be applied by a licensed applicator.
- Physical removal through a service provider, proprietary surface skimming system, or DIY surface skimming system.

A permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may be required.

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