



DUCKWEED FACT SHEET

What is duckweed?

Duckweed is a small, aquatic plant that grows on the surface of water. Duckweed usually grows in standing water and is more widespread during the warmest months of the year. Instead of being rooted in the lake bottom like many other aquatic plants, this plant has free-floating roots. This means it is often blown around the lake by wind. Duckweed can form a bright green blanket over the surface of small waterbodies, which some find unappealing. Despite its looks, this native plant benefits wildlife and poses no human or environmental health risks. Duckweed is a great food source for ducks and geese, and it can help prevent unwanted algae blooms. Duckweed also acts as a natural mosquito shield by preventing large hatches of mosquitoes.

Quick Facts

Common Names	Duckweed, water lentil
Location	Ponds and small lakes
Description	Tiny, free-floating green plants
Identification	Green blanket on water's surface
Importance	Food source for ducks and geese, prevents algae blooms, limits large mosquito hatches, provides habitat for aquatic insects
Management	Aquatic herbicide may be applied by a licensed applicator*, or it may be removed by skimming the water's surface

*check with the MnDNR and your city before applying herbicide

How can I identify duckweed?

From a distance, duckweed can look like a smooth, green blanket covering the water. However, it is really individual duckweed plants that are not connected together. Each duckweed plant has tiny green leaves with small roots that hang below the plant. Duckweed is often mistaken for algae because of its green color. If you see a waterbody covered in green, and you're unsure what it is, it is best to stay out of the water.

Managing duckweed

Even with its benefits, there may be areas where duckweed is unwanted. Although duckweed is difficult to control because it regrows easily, there are two methods to manage duckweed. Aquatic herbicide can be applied by a licensed applicator to control duckweed growth. Duckweed can also be removed by physically skimming the water's surface. The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District does not perform duckweed control because duckweed does not impair water quality. Check with your city about any local rules before applying herbicide. A permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may also be required to apply herbicides. Learn more at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/aquatic_plants/floatingleaf_plants/duckweeds.html.



Duckweed plants



Duckweed covering a pond