

FREE FLOATING PLANTS

Species: *Lemna* spp., duckweed

Family: Lemnaceae

NATIVE

Leaf: No true leaves. Leaf-like body is called a thallus.

Stem: None.

Flower: Tiny, rarely seen. Arises from a pouch in the thallus.

Fruit: Inconspicuous, usually 1 seeded.

Root: Single short rootlet hangs from the underside of each plant.

Propagation: New plants bud from pockets on either side of the parent plant and eventually break apart. Overwinters as winterbuds on the lake bottom, but rarely reproduces from seeds.

Distributed by wind and on the bodies of birds and aquatic animals. A single lesser duckweed plant can reproduce itself about every 3 days under ideal conditions in nutrient-rich waters.

Habitat: Still and slow-moving waters in many freshwater habitats. Often found along the shoreline after water levels have dropped.



Donald Cameron, Maine Natural Areas Program

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Species: *Spirodela polyrrhiza*, duck-meal, giant-duckweed, great duckweed, duckmeat

Family: Lemnaceae

NATIVE

Leaf: No true leaves. Plant body (thallus) is actually an expanded 'stem' that functions as a leaf. It is oval to oblong, has 7-16 distinct veins, and is 4-10 mm long. Thallus is glossy green and smooth on the upper surface and reddish purple below. It may occur alone or in clusters of 2-5.

Stem: No stems.

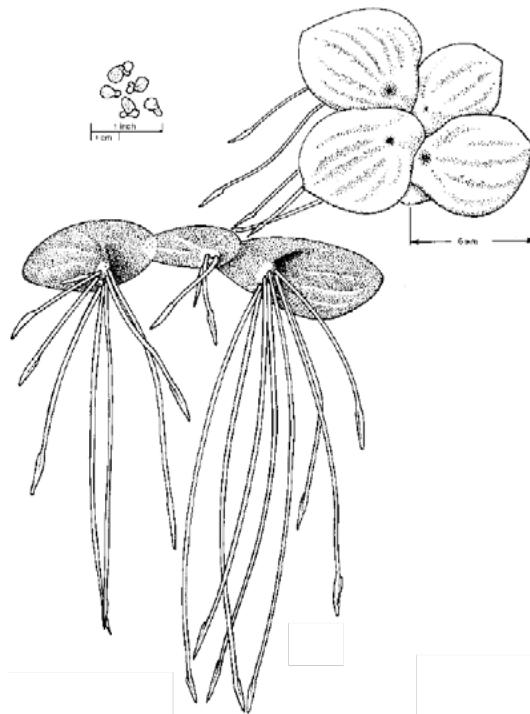
Flower: Tiny and rarely produced, occur in 2 pouches, usually 2 male flowers and 1 female flower in each pouch.

Fruit: A ribbed seed develops in a balloon-like bag (utricle).

Root: Clusters of 7 to 21 slender fibrous roots hang below the surface of the water from each plant. Each root ends with a pointed rootcap.

Propagation: Reproduces quickly by asexual budding, seeds, and overwinters as dark-green or brown buds on the sediments.

Habitat: Occurs in freshwater: lakes, ponds, marshes and slow streams in areas sheltered from wind. Often grows with other members of the duckweed family.



FREE FLOATING PLANTS

Species: *Wolffia* spp., watermeal

Family: Lemnaceae

NATIVE

Leaf: No true leaves. Leaf-like body is called a thallus. Roundish, thick, thallus up to 1.3 mm in diameter.

Stem: None.

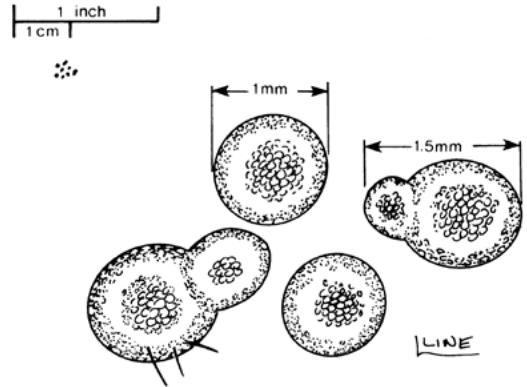
Flower: Tiny, rarely seen. Arises from a cavity on the upper surface of the thallus.

Fruit: Balloon-like fruit (utricle) contains a tiny (0.5 mm) smooth seed.

Root: None.

Propagation: Seeds. Forms winder buds on the lake bottom. New plants can bud from a pocket on the basal end of the parent plant and eventually the plants break apart. Plants are distributed by wind and on the bodies of birds and other animals.

Habitat: Marshes, ponds, shallow edges of lakes, slowly moving streams, and ditches. Often found on wet soil when water levels drop. This plant is rare and only occurs west of the Continental Divide.



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