

Vermont Invasive Exotic Plant Fact Sheet

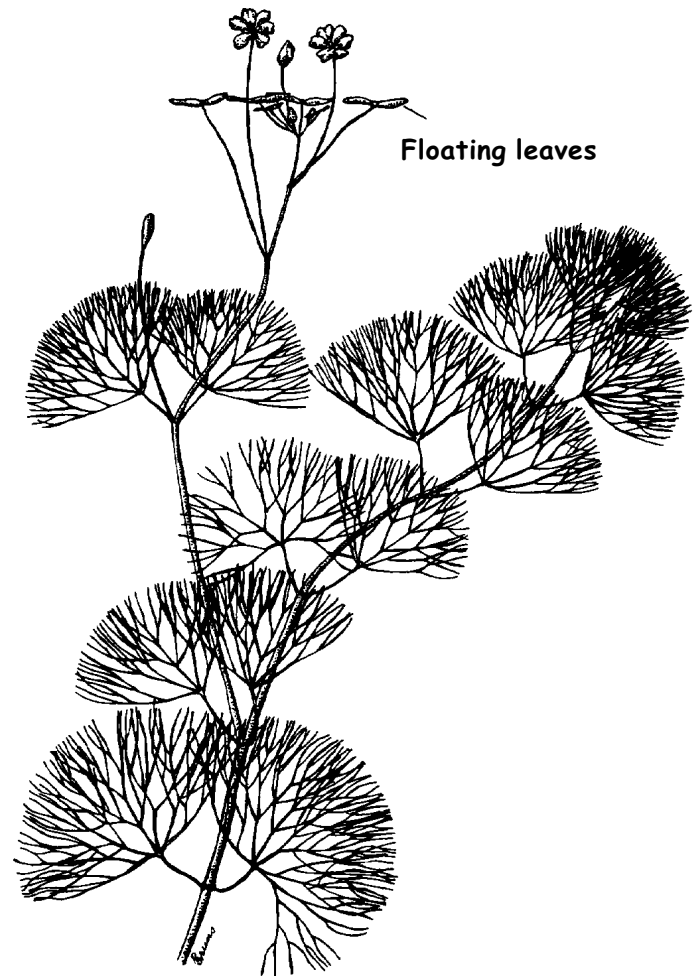
Fanwort *Cabomba caroliniana* Gray. Fanwort Family Vermont Class A Noxious Weed

Description: Fanwort is a rooted, submersed, perennial aquatic plant which grows from short, fragile underground stems with fibrous roots. Its underwater leaves are either green or reddish-purple, are opposite on the stem, and are finely divided into segments in a fan-shaped arrangement. Floating leaves may be present during flowering and are small, inconspicuous and oblong in shape. Flowers are solitary, white to pinkish in color, and are produced on stalks below the water surface. Fanwort's flowers will float on the water surface for a brief time, allowing cross-pollination to occur. Fanwort spreads most frequently by stem fragments or underground roots; however, new plants can also be produced from seed.

Habitat: Fanwort grows in freshwater lakes and ponds, and slow-moving streams and ditches in water from three to ten feet deep. In some locations, it has been found at much greater depths. Alkaline waters can inhibit its growth; it is typically found inhabiting waters with a pH between 4.0 and 6.0.

Threats: Fanwort is an extremely persistent and competitive plant. Under suitable conditions, fanwort can form dense stands, crowding out native aquatic plants. Once established, it can clog water flow and interfere with recreational and agricultural water use.

Distribution: Fanwort is a native of the subtropic-temperate regions of eastern North and South America. It is common in the southeastern United States along the coastal plain from Virginia to Florida. It is also known to occur in southern New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, southern Michigan, southern Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, eastern Oklahoma, eastern Texas, Washington, and northern Oregon.



(Crow and Hellquist 1983. Aquatic Plants of New England Series: *Cabomba caroliniana*,. Illustration by Pam Bruns)

Distribution continued: A popular plant in aquariums, fanwort's spread from its native range has probably been aided through the careless dumping of fish tanks. Fragment transport on recreational equipment is another means of its spread. While it has not yet been found growing in the wild in Vermont, it is frequently available through aquarium and pond internet sites.

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Fanwort

Fanwort Family (*Cabombaceae*)

Control: Fanwort is difficult to eradicate once established. Mechanical removal, water level manipulation, and herbicides have been tried with limited success.

* No person may use pesticides, biological controls, bottom barriers, structural controls or powered mechanical devices in waters of the state to control nuisance aquatic vegetation, insects or other aquatic life including lamprey unless that person has been issued a permit by the secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources.

References:

- Crow, G.E. and C.B. Hellquist. 1984. *Aquatic Vascular Plants of New England: Part 7. Cabombaceae, Nymphaeaceae, Nelumbonaceae, and Ceratophyllaceae*. New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station, University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire. Station Bulletin 527.
- Crow, G.E. and C.B. Hellquist. 2000. *Aquatic & Wetland Plants of Northeast North America*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hanlon, Chuck. 1990. *A Florida Native - Cabomba (Fanwort)*. *Aquatics*. Vol. 12, No. 4.
- Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*. February, 1996.



For more information about Vermont's invasive exotic plant species or if you would like to know how you can help, please contact:

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Tel: 802-229-4425

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