Parrotfeather
*Myriophyllum aquaticum* (*M. brasiliense*)

Parrotfeather, a submersed, perennial member of the milfoil family, is considered to be native to South America, possibly Brazil. It was introduced into the United States in the late 1800's as an aquarium plant and has spread through most of the subtropical regions of the South and along the West Coast, where it often has become highly invasive, forming dense mats on the surface of the water. More temperate populations have been reported. Most of these populations have been short-lived, but some have persisted and spread. The recent spread of parrotfeather parallels its sale and distribution by wetland nurseries and water garden enthusiasts across the country. Most of the recent increase in complaints about parrotfeather in North Carolina can be traced back to intentional plantings from water gardens and pond beautification efforts. Dense growths of parrotfeather provide breeding areas for mosquitoes and degrade water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. Parrotfeather grows in a variety of habitats ranging from full sun to partial shade in wet soil to water depths of six feet or more. Although the plant is largely submersed, an emergent portion (its floral spike) may extend 8 to 12 inches above the surface. The stems are smooth, often reddish in color, and may appear slightly woody. The plant is named for the feather-like appearance of its gray-green leaves. The leaves finely dissected, are arranged in whorls of 3 to 6, and may be up to 2 in. long and 1/2 in. wide. The segments of the emergent leaves are more coarse than those of the submersed leaves, but otherwise appear similar. Inconspicuous flowers form in the axils of the emergent leaves. Only female plants are present in the United States, hence reproduction occurs entirely vegetatively, primarily by fragmentation.

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