

## Weed of the Month

### Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)

Be on the lookout for starry stonewort, an emerging Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). It is a bright green macro-algae that produces a characteristic white, star-shaped bulbil. Branchlets are various lengths and are arranged in whorls around the stem. The white, star-shaped bulbils are about the size of a grain of rice.

Starry stonewort is native to Eurasia, and was unintentionally introduced in the Great Lakes through cargo ships. The species was first confirmed in Minnesota in August of 2015 in Stearns County. It has not yet been identified in Dakota County. It is spread through the movement of water craft and water equipment. To prevent the spread of Starry Stonewort, and other aquatic invasive species, follow these important steps:



- If you own a watercraft:
  - Carefully and thoroughly clean your watercraft every time you exit a waterbody. Some AIS are small and difficult to see, such as Zebra Mussels. To remove or kill them, spray with high-pressure water, and dry for at least 5 days.
  - Drain all water-related equipment, including boat, ballast tanks, portable bait containers, as well as bilge, livewell, and baitwell. Remove and keep drain plugs out and draining devices open while transporting.
- Always dispose of unwanted bait in the trash. It is illegal to release bait into a waterbody or move aquatic animals from one waterbody to another. If you want to keep your bait, you must refill the bait container with bottled or tap water.

Learn to identify Starry Stonewort, and report new infestations to a local [DNR invasive species contact](#). AIS identification guides are available at City Hall, or online at the [Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center](#).

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*Photo above courtesy of the MN Department of Natural Resources.*