

Aquatic Invasive Species Field Guide

Aquatic Forget-Me-Not (*Myosotis scorpioides*)

DO NOT PLANT THIS INVASIVE SPECIES!

Wisconsin Status: Aquatic forget-me-not is a Restricted invasive species under WI NR 40. Control is encouraged if it is on your property. This species cannot be transferred, transported, or introduced without a permit issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Description: Aquatic Forget-me-not is a non-native, herbaceous perennial that escaped water gardens and ponds and spread to shorelines, wetlands, marshes, moist woodlands, and wet meadows. It is a competitive plant that grows rapidly, forms dense monocultures that crowds out native groundcover, reduces soil nutrients, and reduces wildlife habitat.



Caution: Contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that are toxic to mammals.

Spread: Seeds, water currents, fragmentation, escapes from cultivation, and human activity.

Reproduction: It is capable of abundant reproduction through spreading stolon's (runners) and abundant seed production.

Height: From 6 inches to 24 inches tall.

Flower: Blooms May-September. Terminal, branched clusters of showy blue, 5-petaled, flat flowers with a yellow center. Flowers are 1/4 to 1/3 inch across. Sepals have flat, tight hairs.

Leaves: Alternate, oblong to lance-shaped with a rounded tip, prominent central vein, smooth edges and 1-3 inches long.

Stems: Slightly hairy, round, and angled. Multiple stems branch from the base of the plant, and further branch as the stem elongates.

Aquatic Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*)

Wisconsin Status: Aquatic forget-me-not is Restricted under Wisconsin's Invasive Species Rule NR 40, so control is encouraged if it is on your property. This species cannot be transferred, transported, sold, or introduced without a permit.

Native to: Europe, Asia

Ecological Impacts: Aquatic forget-me-not is a fast-growing and fast-spreading non-native semi-aquatic plant that forms dense colonies. It invades shorelines and shallow water areas of lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, bogs, swamps, ponds, and forest, ditches, and flood plains.

The dense, almost impenetrable, monotypic mats crowd out native plants, reduce habitat for wildlife and fish, reduce bird nesting and rearing sites, compact soil, and alter hydrology by trapping sediment.

Spread: Spreads quickly by seeds that float and by underground rhizomes that send out new shoots above the ground and roots below. Develops thick mats of rhizomes that can connect several hundred plants.

Similar Species: Aquatic forget-me-not can be confused with the native Small forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*) and non-native Woodland forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatic*).



Large cluster of aquatic forget-me-not growing in shallow water.

Photo credit: First Nature.

Control: Efforts are most likely to succeed when plants are small and manageable. Removing flowers and seed capsules can prevent the spread and removing the root system will prevent re-growth. Use an integrated approach of monitoring for seedlings and re-growth and control efforts.

Manual: Hand removal is effective for removing small plants and plant populations. The plants remove easily when the soil is moist. Hand pull or dig the entire plant, including the roots, before the seeds set. **Caution:** The disturbance associated with digging can result in shoreline and sediment erosion

Mowing: Mowing is not advised. Mowed plants will regenerate from the rhizomes.

Chemical: Dicamba or glyphosate may affect *Myosotis* species. Permits may be needed. Always check DNR regulations for the most up-to-date information regarding permits for control methods.

Handling During Control Efforts: Keep all parts of the plant contained in a bag or bucket.

Disposal: Dispose of in landfill or by burning. The DNR's and Waste Management programs are asking property owners to separate and bag AIS in clear bags and label the bags "Invasive plants – approved by DNR for landfilling."

Site Restoration: Plant natives in its place.

Report AIS: Visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/report>

Developed by the Aquatic Invasive Species Program at Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department (Stephanie Boismenu R 3/2024)

Reference: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: *Aquatic Forget-me-not* www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/

Oneida County Aquatic Invasive Species Program
Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department
PO Box 400 | Rhinelander, WI 54501
715-369-7835 Visit us at www.oclw.org

