

# Starry Stonewort

*Nitellopsis obtusa*



## What is it and Why is it a Problem?

Starry Stonewort is a large freshwater alga that forms dense mats in the water, allowing it to alter habitat, outcompete native species and reduce biodiversity. It significantly interferes with fish habitat by impeding movement, altering feeding regimes and prey habitat, and disrupting spawning grounds. It also interferes with recreational activities such as swimming, fishing and boating.

So far, in The Land Between, only male plants have been reported. Male plants do not have roots, which makes them extremely easy to spread. They can also survive the winter well because their seeds are deposited and stored in mud.



## What Does it Look Like?

- Grows in a dense mat in the water 2 - 10 m thick
- Stems are thin
- Branchlets look like fishing line, and occur in whorls of 4-6 with blunt tips
- White, star-shaped bulbils located at the nodes, 3-6 mm wide



## How Can it be Managed?

- Report sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).

- Learn how to identify it so you can avoid accidentally spreading it with your fishing gear and equipment. Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear before leaving a fishing spot and before heading to a new fishing spot to remove any mud and plant fragments. Refer to the [OMNRF's Boater's Action Plan](#) for more information on cleaning your boat and gear.
- Avoid boating near known Starry Stonewort infestations and reduce your speed. Propellers can cut off pieces of the plant and spread them to new areas.
- If you are considering removing any invasive aquatic plants, ensure you follow [OMNRF's rules](#) regarding removal - the beds of most water bodies in Ontario are Crown Land.
- Do not buy or sell Starry Stonewort for aquariums or watergarden use. Oftentimes invasive aquatic plants end up reaching water bodies when people dispose of their unwanted aquarium plants. The correct way to dispose of unwanted aquatic plants is to donate them or throw them in the garbage. They can also be composted or mulched 30 m or more away from a watercourse on land.

## References

[Great Lakes Nonindigenous Species Information System](#), produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program](#), developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).