

# Native Floating Aquatic Plant

# COMMON DUCKWEED

*Lemna minor*



## About

You'll likely find this species, Common Duckweed, in your lake as it is the most widespread Duckweed species across North America. Common Duckweed has piqued the interest of researchers for its fast growth rate and its ability to remove pollutants in water. This species is a native, aquatic plant that is free-floating, meaning that it does not attached roots to lake substrate. It is typically found in nutrient rich, slow moving water.



## Identification

There are several species of Duckweed in Ontario which can make identification challenging.

- Distinguishing feature is the single root from each plant body (other Duckweed species have 5 to 15 roots per plant, or none at all)
- 1 – 4 leaves can share a single root
- Leaves are oval, about 1 – 8 mm long, and light green in colour
- Flowers are very small, measuring about 1 mm in diameter, and are rarely produced

### References

[Common Cyanobacteria Bloom 'Look-Alikes'](#), by Connecticut Government

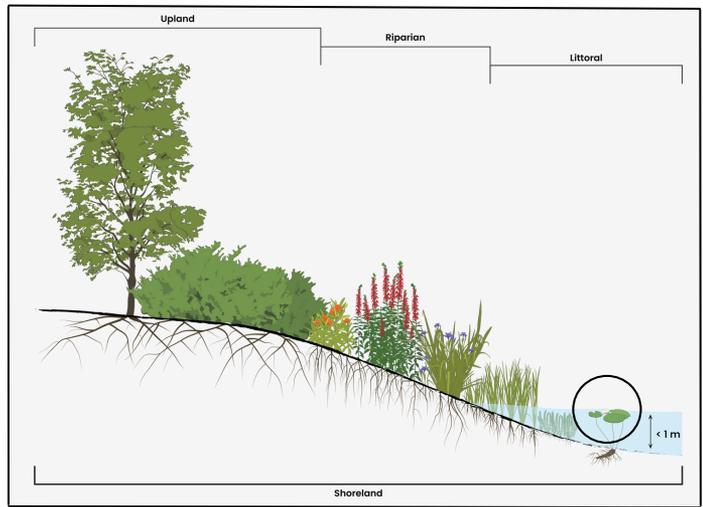
[Common duckweed Lemna minor](#) produced by U.S. Forest Service

[Duckweed](#) by Ilias Kyriazakis and Thomas Young

[Lemna Minor](#) by Indiana University Bloomington

# Where is this species found in the shoreland?

Common Duckweed is found in the littoral zone of the shoreland, as demonstrated in the diagram.



**Did you know** that the name Duckweed refers to a unique method of transportation for this species? The plant's single, sticky root adheres to *ducks* and other waterfowl, which allow the plant to reach other bodies of water to colonize!



## Benefits

- Improves water quality by filtering out heavy metals and pollutants, such as phosphorus
  - Commonly used in bioremediation projects
- Food source for waterfowl and fish
- Provides habitat and shelter for wildlife including fish and benthic invertebrates
- Regulates lake temperature as it creates shade through dense colonies on the waters surface



## Don't weed me!

Common Duckweed is a beneficial, native species that can grow prolifically. On a large scale, dense populations of *Lemna minor* can cover large surfaces of water. From afar, this species may look like a potentially harmful algal bloom. This distinction can be made upon closer inspection, as *Lemna minor* has leaves and roots while algae species do not. It is important to distinguish and protect native species, as they are key contributors to healthy lakes.