

Nuttall's Waterweed

Species Description

Scientific name: *Elodea nuttallii* (Planch.) H. St. John

Other Common name: Nuttall's Pondweed

Native to: North America

Habitat: favours still or slow flowing eutrophic water.

Elodea nuttallii has been found growing in a wide range of water bodies: lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers streams, canals and ditches. *E. nuttallii* tends to dominate native macrophyte communities which may lead to their local extinction. *E. nuttallii* is also known to replace other invasive species as the dominant species in an impacted ecosystem. More recently, data from Britain suggests that this species is now becoming replaced by another introduced species *Largarosiphon major*. It is tolerant of disturbance, oil pollution and salinity up to 14 parts per thousand (approx. half seawater). All *Elodea* species tend to take up metals from the sediment and release them into the water. *E. nuttallii* is very tolerant of Copper in particular.



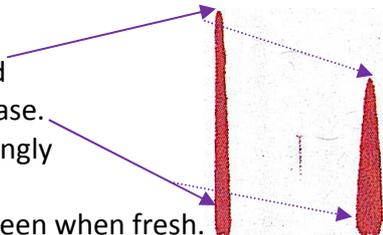
Elodea nuttallii in Carrigadrohid Reservoir, August 2006. © Central Fisheries Board, 2000-2009

Research on *Elodea nuttallii* by the Central Fisheries Board in Carrigadrohid Reservoir has found that hectares of water are un-fishable and are unavailable for any water-based leisure pursuit.

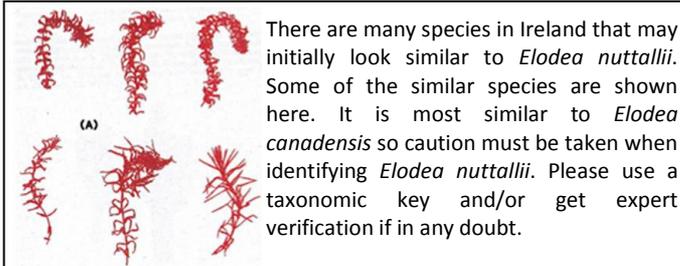
This species has most likely been introduced to Ireland through the garden plant trade. If you have it in your garden, please do not dispose of any plant fragments in the 'wild'. Report all sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Key ID Features

- * Leaf tips taper to a point and the leaf is broadest at the base.
- * Usually some leaves are strongly recurved and/or twisted.
- * Root tips white to greyish-green when fresh.



Similar Species



There are many species in Ireland that may initially look similar to *Elodea nuttallii*. Some of the similar species are shown here. It is most similar to *Elodea canadensis* so caution must be taken when identifying *Elodea nuttallii*. Please use a taxonomic key and/or get expert verification if in any doubt.

Image above *E. nuttallii* (and similar below for *E. canadensis*) courtesy of BSBI (Simpson, D.A. 1986). A: silhouettes of plants, B: silhouettes of leaves, C; perianth of female flower.

Elodea canadensis

E. canadensis is most similar to *E. nuttallii* and it has a more widespread distribution.

The majority of leaves are 1.75mm wide or more. The leaf tip is rounded and leaves are broadest at mid-leaf (often nearly parallel sided). Leaves rarely recurved.

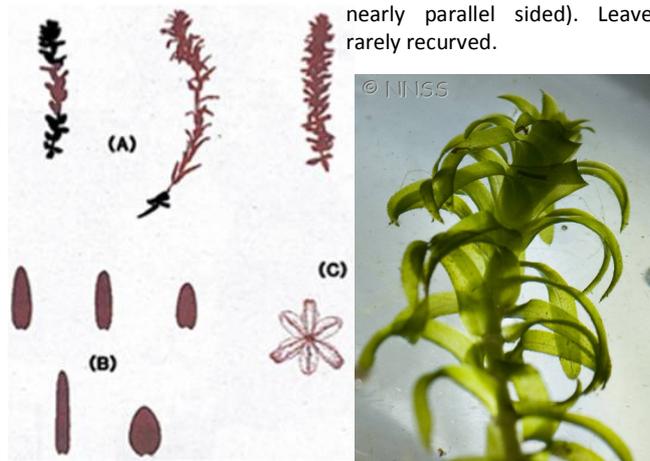


Photo courtesy of GB Non-native Species Secretariat

Elodea callitrichoides

Leaves never strongly recurved, usually flat, spreading, with straight margins, at least some >10mm long. Root tips red when fresh. Sepals of flower 3-4.3mm long. Currently only recorded in one location in Ireland.

Egeria densa

Leaves usually in whorls of 4-5 (sometimes 3-8). Bright green and leaves stiff, with obvious teeth. Closely resembles a robust *Elodea* when not in flower. Flowers are larger than the other species at 1-1.2 cm across and with three petals. Currently only recorded in one location in Ireland.



Photos courtesy of L. J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut & W. T. Haller, University of Florida, Bugwood.org

Lagarosiphon major



Has leaves appearing to be in whorls, but they are not. They are arranged spirally along the stem. Resembling, but larger than *E. nuttallii*. Leaves often closely packed together. Leaves strongly recurved; stiff and crunchy. It has been recorded in many parts of Ireland.



Photos: courtesy of Colette O' Flynn

Hydrilla verticillata

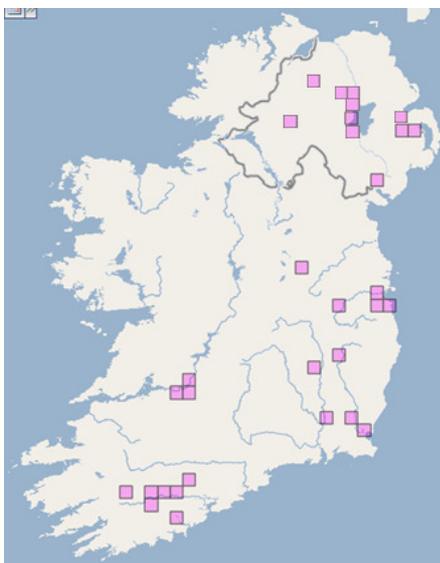
Leaves in whorls of 3 to 8. Leaf margins distinctly serrate. Currently only recorded in one location in Ireland.

Callitriche hermaphroditica

When **not** in fruit can look like *E. nuttallii*. Look for leaf notched at apex. Widespread in N. Ireland, very localised in south.

Distribution of *E. nuttallii* in Ireland

Elodea nuttallii was first recorded in Ireland in on the west side of Lough Neagh in 1984.



Source: National Biodiversity Data Centre

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References and further reading:

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