

## Pulling water chestnut by hand

Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is a major nuisance in parts of the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers forming dense patches that severely impact the water quality, habitat, and recreational use.

Water chestnut originates from Eurasia and was first brought to the United States in the 1800's. Surface leaves are triangular with long petioles which have an inflated spongy air bladder while the submerged leaves are hair-like. Flowering begins in mid- to late-July, with their nuts ripening approximately one month later. Flowering and seed production continue into the fall when frost kills the floating rosettes. The mature nuts sink to the bottom when dropped and may be able to produce new plants for up to 12 years. Note: the plant is unrelated to the edible water chestnut (*Eleocharis dulcis*) used in Chinese cooking.



**Safety:** Wear a life jacket when boating and work with a partner. Wear gloves (the nuts are very sharp).

### Hand pulling:

1. Work before mid-August when the plants drop their seeds for the year.
2. Identify the water chestnuts and note their location.
3. Pull the entire plant gently out gripping as far down the stem as you can conveniently reach. They are not deeply rooted and should come up easily. Make sure that you get the entire rosette with the nuts (seeds), since the water chestnut spread by seed and as much of the stem as you can (break off the stem if needed). Put them in a basket or directly in your canoe.
4. Compost the plants well away from the river so that seeds are not washed back into the river.
5. Let us know where and when you pulled plants (email [sflint@oars3rivers.org](mailto:sflint@oars3rivers.org))! We're tracking where plants are/have been. A GPS location is best, otherwise give us a description of the area.

