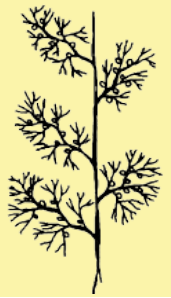




# COMMON BLADDERWORT

## *UTRICULARIA VULGARIS*



Common bladderwort is a native aquatic plant and is unique among submersed species in Lake Champlain--it's a carnivorous plant and is technically the fastest plant in the world. The tiny bladders on the plant are traps that, when the hair-like triggers around the bladder are set off, suck in water and seal in the aquatic microorganism that set it off--a process that takes about 10 milliseconds.

## Characteristics:

### Vegetative

- Leaf type: feather-compound.
- Leaf shape: stem-like.
- Leaf arrangement: alternate arrangement.
- Leaf position: feather out from the stem.

### Flower

 - snapdragon-like flowers

- Number of petals/sepals: two-lipped.
- Color: bright yellow.
- Attachment: Fruit: round capsule.

### Seed

- Seed in fruit (round capsule less than a quarter inch in diameter).

## Habitat Preference

Found in lakes, interdunal ponds, wet marshes, and river and streams. Often in water up to 6 feet.



Photo from Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation



Photo from Wikimedia Commons



# COMMON BLADDERWORT

*UTRICULARIA VULGARIS*

## Cultural History Notes

The word “utricularia” is Latin for “little bag”, which refers to the bladders that make bladderwort distinct: the plant’s leaves are interspersed with tiny sacs that trap and digest prey.

## Ecological Contributions to Lake Champlain

### Biological

- Several insects, mammals, and waterfowl use this plant as a food source. Bladderwort is carnivorous predate aquatic microorganisms such as protozoa and rotifers.

### Chemical

- Enzymes and/or bacteria inside the traps aid in digestion, creating a microbiome around the traps.

### Physical

- The "bladders", from which the common name is derived, are used to capture small aquatic organisms. Hairs at the opening of the bladder serve as triggers, and when contacted, mechanically cause the trap to spring open, drawing in water and organisms like a vacuum.

## Similar Species

### *Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum)*

- Aquatic invasive plant common in Lake Champlain and surrounding waterbodies.
- High tolerance of low temperatures - starts growing earlier than other vegetation and form canopies that block light, which inhibits the growth of native plants and can lead to their displacement.



EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL



COMMON BLADDERWORT

### How to differentiate common bladderwort and Eurasian watermilfoil

- When bladderwort is not flowering, it can be confused with invasive Eurasian watermilfoil.
- Bladderwort has divided leaves and tiny bladders, while Eurasian watermilfoil has feathered leaves and no bladders.

Scan to learn more about Lake Champlain's native aquatic plants!



The Lake Champlain Committee is a watershed-based nonprofit that uses science-based advocacy, education, and collaborative action to protect and restore water quality, safeguard natural habitats and ensure recreational access in the Lake Champlain Basin.



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