



LITTLE FLOATING-HEART

Nymphoides cordata



Little floating-heart is native aquatic plant that resembles a miniature pond lily. It has small, floating, heart-shaped leaves with purple undersides.

Characteristics:

Vegetative

- Leaf type: not divided (blade is made up of one segment).
- Leaf shape: heart to oval shaped (reddish-purple), 3-7 centimeters long.
- Leaf arrangement: alternate (one leaf per node),
- Leaf position: some floating at the surface of the water.

Flower

- Number of petals/sepals: five,
- Color: white-cream in color, yellow in center ,
- Attachment: Fruit: dry and splits open when ripe,

Seed

- Flattened, gray-black with fringe of tiny hairs that allow seed to float and cling to animal fur.

Habitat Preference

Found in freshwater ponds, and lakes, as well as in slow-moving rivers and streams





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Cultural History Notes

- There are reports of indigenous people from the Seminole tribe using little floating-heart as a treatment for “turtle illness”--trembling, shallow breath, and cough.
- Currently a popular plant for cultivated water gardens

Ecological Contributions to Lake Champlain

Biological

- Submerged portions provide habitats for many micro and macro invertebrates. These invertebrates in turn are used as food by fish and other wildlife species (e.g. amphibians, reptiles, ducks, etc.).

Chemical

- Decomposition by bacteria and fungi provides food (called “detritus”) for many aquatic invertebrates.

Similar Species

European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*)

- Aquatic invasive species that has spread throughout the Lake Champlain Basin
- Can form dense mats that prevent light and nutrients from reaching native submerged plants.



EUROPEAN FROGBIT



LITTLE FLOATING-HEART

How to differentiate little floating-heart and European frogbit

- Little floating-heart flowers have 5 petals and European frogbit has 3.
- Little floating-heart has a dense cluster of short, thick roots while European frogbit has long, unbranched root systems with numerous smaller root hairs.

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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