

# STARRY STONEWORT

*Nitellopsis obtusa*



Be on the lookout for this invader!



Photo: Lisa Huberty, PhD, MDEQ Water Resource Division

## Description:

Aquatic macroalgae with smooth, irregular branches, root-like rhizoids. Forms dense mats along bottom forming irregularly spaced pillows of biomass at various heights. Stems may reach 33" in length. Whorls of 5-8 fine, uneven length branches arise at an acute angle from nodes. Distinctive white star-shaped rhizoids on all parts of plant at all times of year; dark reddish gametangia (berry-like structures). Feels gelatinous, unlike native Chara (aka Muskgrass), which feels bristly and scaly. Musky smell of native muskgrass not as pronounced for Starry Stonewort.

**Habitat:** Still or slow-moving waters; grows at depths ranging from 39" to 93 ft.!

**Mode of Spread:** Fragments and gametangia dispersed by boats, waterfowl, and drift.

# IDENTIFICATION

STEM



Photo: Kristian Peters, wikicommons\_2

**Stems:** May reach 33" in length. Dark reddish gametangia on branches at nodes.

**Leaves:** Whorls of 5-8 fine, uneven-length branches arise at an acute angle from nodes. Contents can be squeezed out of tube-like cell wall when cut.

LEAVES



Photo: Michelle Nault

**Flower:** Lacks true flowers. Cream colored bulbs (star-shaped) form at the base of each cluster of branches.

FLOWERS



Photo: McNALMS

GAMETANGIA



Photo: Doug Pullman, MiCorps, 2013 presentation

## Known to occur at these locations in Northern Michigan:

- Not yet found in the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council Service area.
- Nearest occurrence is in **Millecoquin Lake** near Naubinway (Upper Peninsula)

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Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council • [www.watershedcouncil.org](http://www.watershedcouncil.org)

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