

Invasive Species Alert

STARRY STONEWORT

(NITELLOPSIS OBTUSA)

PROHIBITED IN MICHIGAN

IDENTIFICATION:

- Whorls of 4-6 branchlets/leaves with blunt tips.
- Star-shaped bulbils are produced at the nodes, generally 3-6 mm wide.
- Can reach up to 33 inches in length.

HABITAT: This submerged annual macroalga invades lakes, ponds, reservoirs and slow moving rivers. It will inhabit freshwater habitats ranging from 3 feet to 95 feet in depth.

NATIVE RANGE: Europe and western Asia.

U.S. DISTRIBUTION: Michigan, northern Indiana, southeastern Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the northeast United States.

MICHIGAN DISTRIBUTION: Starry stonewort is widespread in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

LOCAL CONCERN: Starry stonewort forms dense mats in lakes and can significantly reduce the diversity of other aquatic plants. Dense mats of vegetation can also impede movement of fish, spawning activity, water flow and recreational activities.



Starry stonewort

Photo by Paul Skawinski



Starry stonewort

Photo by Scott Brown

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKE: Chara looks similar but feels scaly and brittle and often smells like a skunk's spray.

REPORT THIS SPECIES: Visit [MISIN.MSU.edu](https://www.misin.msu.edu) or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone.

Photos courtesy of Paul Skawinski (top) and Scott Brown (bottom).