

## Lemnaceae

### duckweed family

A small family including only 30 species, they are arranged within six genera. Tiny in stature, rarely do they exceed 10mm in length. All are aquatic and generally floating. They are distinctive in having a thallus, an undifferentiated vegetative body reproducing by budding. There may be one or more simple roots. Flowers are usually absent, if present they are highly reduced.

A. Plants with several roots; almost round and reddish below.

*Spirodela*

aa. Plants with a single root; green below.

*Lemna*

### ***Lemna* L.**

This genus of 10 species is cosmopolitan in range. Two species are native to Nova Scotia. The thallus is marked by 1–5 tiny nerves, sometimes not visible. It is green above and below. There is but a single root.

Key to species

A. Thalli ovate, 2–5mm long, floating on the surface.

*Lemna turionifera*

aa. Thalli long and narrow, narrow base attached to mother plant, submerged.

*L. trisulca*

### ***Lemna trisulca* L.**

#### **Star Duckweed**



*Photo by Ross Hall*

A submerged plant, its thallus is of a very different shape than the following species. It is oblong to ovate or even oblanceolate in outline, attaching to the mother plant by a narrow stipe. New plants remain attached for some time, hence the tangled matted appearance of its colonies. Larger plants may reach 6–8mm long. Producing only a single seed,



Photo by Ross Hall

it remains immersed.

May be abundant in pools, shallows and slow-flowing streams.

From Kings and Cumberland counties to Cape Breton.

Ranges from NS to AK, south to CA, TX and AL.

***Lemna turionifera* Landolt**  
**Turion Duckweed**

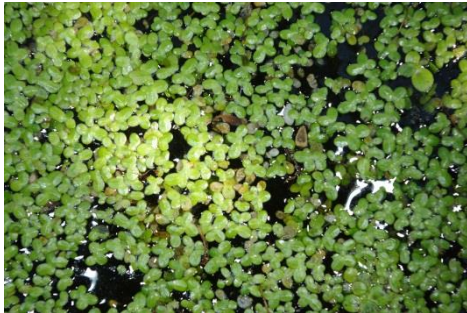


Photo by Martin Thomas

Smaller than *Spirodela*, this duckweed bears only a single root. Its lower surface is green, as is the upper one. Our material was mistakenly included in *L. minor*.

Aquatic, floating. Forms large mats on shallow pools in late summer.

Ranges here from Annapolis Co. to northern Cape Breton.

Found from NF to AK, south to CA, TX and AL.



Photo by Ross Hall

## ***Spirodela* Schleid.**

### **Duckweed**

Cosmopolitan in range, only one of the four species is native to Nova Scotia. The thallus is round and sometimes convex below, marked by several veins. There are 2–12 roots below and two reproductive pouches along the side. Inflorescence comprises three tiny flowers, two are staminate carried in one of the pouches, but not often produced.

## ***Spirodela polyrhiza* (L.) Schleid**

### **Duckweed**



*Photo by Ross Hall*



*Photo by Ross Hall*

The thallus is broad and ovate, 6mm long and with 4–8 roots below. Lower surface is purplish red and marked by the 6–7 veins arising from one end.

Surfaces of streams and ponds.

Distributed from Kings and Cumberland counties, scattered to Inverness and Victoria Cos.

Elsewhere from NS to BC, south to CA, FL and Mexico; Central America and Eurasia.