

Najadaceae

water-nymph family

Another small family of submerged aquatic herbs, this one too includes a single genus, of 35 species found throughout the world. Most are annuals producing filiform and opposite or whorled leaves. The flowers are small and inconspicuous, borne in the leaf axils in clusters or singly. Species are monoecious, flowers staminate or pistillate. The single anther of the staminate flower is surrounded by a membranous involucre. Pistillate flowers are reduced to a solitary pistil but no involucre.

***Najas* L.**

As above. Only two species reach Nova Scotia.

Key to species

A. Leaves 0.3–1mm wide, with >18 denticles spread all along the margins.

Najas flexilis

aa. Leaves <0.5mm wide, denticles 13–17 on the margins.

N. gracillima

***Najas flexilis* (Willd.) Rosk. & Schmidt**

Slender naiad; naiade flexible



Photo by Roger Lloyd

The leaves are nearly filiform, less than 1mm wide, acuminate and whorled. Lying flat, their margins are marked by tiny denticles around the entire leaf. Plants appear brushlike from the crowded whorls of leaves. Fruits are 2–3mm long, lanceolate and very faintly marked.

Flowers and fruits from July to October.

Found at the edges of ponds and lakes, rooting in muddy substrate.

Common from north-central counties to Cape Breton. Less frequent in southwestern Nova Scotia.

Ranges across Canada, south to MD, AZ and CA.

***Najas gracillima* (A. Br.) Magnus**
Thread-like naiad; naïade grêle



Photo by Roger Lloyd



A more slender species than the previous, and with fewer marginal denticles on the leaves. The achenes are thicker and with fewer markings.

Flowers and fruits from July to October.

Mud, peat or sand substrates of ponds pools and lakes.

This species may replace the previous one in the western counties. Known from Hants west to Queens County.

Ranges from NS west to ON, south to MS and GA; CA.

STATUS: ORANGE -listed.