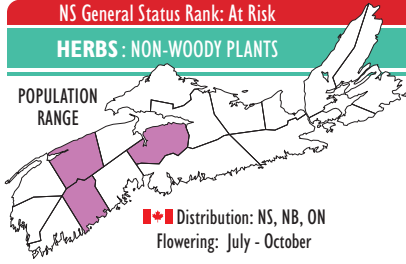


Thread-like Naiad

Najas gracillima

POPULATION RANGE



Flowering: July - October

SIZE: 5 to 50 cm long.

LEAVES: Very slender and delicate, almost translucent pale green, 5-30 mm long and 0.5 mm wide. They have wide (abruptly expanded) bases and 13-17 minute teeth along their margins. They are widely spaced along the stem and become smaller towards the top of the plant.

STEM: Slender and flimsy, 0.2-0.7 mm thick.

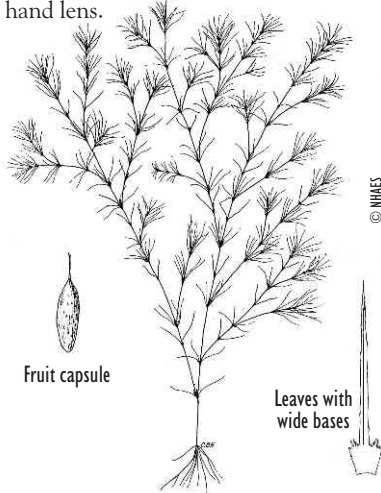
FLOWERS: Small, inconspicuous, usually solitary and located where the leaves meet the stem (axil).

FRUITS: Capsules, 2 to 3 mm long, that contain narrow light brown seeds.

NOTES: This plant grows underwater but entire plants or fragments are often found floating and moving freely with the water like a fine seaweed or hair. It is much easier to see if held at the water's surface and observed with a hand lens.



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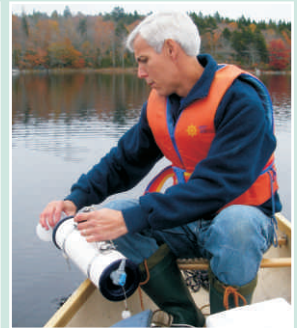
Fruit capsule

Leaves with wide bases



Branching pattern

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Taking a water sample to measure lake nutrient levels

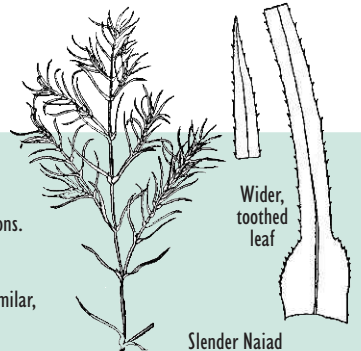
© PAT HUDSON

Habitat:

Rooted in sandy or muddy lake bottoms in shallow to moderately deep water. This species has a low tolerance for pollution and requires waters that are low in nutrients.

Interesting point: Since light scatters underwater, these plants are flexible and have many leaves which allow them to absorb more light from many different directions.

Similar species: Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*) typically has wider (0.2 to 2 mm) leaves which have 20-100 minute teeth along their margins and bases that are gradually expanded. Small thin-leaved Pondweed species (*Potamogeton* spp.) can also be quite similar, but do not have leaves that are expanded at the base and have flowers that are clustered rather than solitary.



Slender Naiad

Wider, toothed leaf

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