

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

White watercress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum* syn. *Nasturtium nasturtium-aquaticum*, *Nasturtium officinale*, *Sisymbrium nasturtium-aquaticum*)



Family name: Mustard family (Brassicaceae)

Native range: Europe

General: Aquatic or semiaquatic perennial. White watercress can grow while submerged or prostrate on wet soil. The stems root from the nodes. Stems hollow.

Leaves: Alternate, nearly toothless, pinnately lobed with 3 to 9 leaflets. The terminal leaflet is larger than the side ones. Leaflets oval shaped.

Flowers: White, small, 0.2 inches wide, 4 petalled flowers borne on long stems, appearing April through September.

Fruit: Slender pods are about 0.4 to 0.6 inches long. The seeds within the pod are small and are contained in two rows.

Look-alikes: Onerow yellowcress (*Rorippa microphylla*), a non-native, is very difficult to distinguish from white watercress in the field. They both occur in moist soils and behave similarly. Onerow yellowcress seed appear in one row in the pod and a slightly larger and more prolific than white watercress seeds.



Habitat: Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, springs, moist ground

Threats to native habitats: White watercress rapidly forms dense stands that exclude native plants.

NJ Status: White watercress is uncommon but spreading rapidly. It is highly threatening to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: White watercress is an edible green that is widely cultivated.

Sources: <http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specieid=91>
Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. *Plants of Pennsylvania*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 684.



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohvos.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

