

Action on Fanwort

Fanwort, an invasive alien aquatic plant, was discovered on Lake Kasshabog over a decade ago. It started to spread very quickly in one bay and then started appearing in a number of locations about the lake.

There was an initial flurry of concern and interest by residents and government officials. Cottagers were instructed not to disturb the plants and Trent University undertook a study to map track the fanwort expansion.

For the past few years nothing has been done. Fanwort populations have grown and, in a few shallow bays, the fanwort has completely overtaken the water crowding out all other plants. Trent University is again looking at tracking the plant through a new and novel aerial process using light refraction.

The Province of Ontario has no mandate to manage this growth. Unless we want all our shallow areas to be overtaken by fanwort, it is time cottagers began to take some action of their own. Here are a few suggestions:

- Don't motor through areas with fanwort. Please pull up your motors and paddle through. That way you won't leave cuttings to float and repopulate other parts of the lake.
- The most effective solution for small dense beds is harvesting by hand. Be careful to pick up all the pieces floating in the water as they can float off and populate a new area. Dry out thoroughly and dispose of carefully.
- For large areas of fanwort by your dock or cottage, it is possible to put down benthic mats. These mats are tarps made of porous materials that block the light that retards the growth of the fanwort. (See full details below)
- October is a good time to identify the fanwort population at your cottage. The native species will have died back leaving the fanwort visible.

The Do's and don'ts of benthic mats:

Benthic mats of less than 4 metres in width (no length restrictions) do not require a permit. Larger mats require federal approval. Contact fisheriesprotection@dfo-mp.gc.ca or 905-336-3893.

The mats can not be placed until early July to allow fish to spawn and you will need to leave them in place for six weeks before removing or moving them to a new location. They must be removed by the fall each year but can be used year after year.

The mats are available in Canada through Home Hardware under the name Natural Marine No Weed Mat, Item #6610-358 and cover an area of 18ft. x 30"ft. for a cost of \$330.

There is lots of information about benthic mats on various websites should you wish more information.

Guide to Aquatic Plants:

If you'd like to know more about the aquatic plants in our lake complete with illustrations, the Kawartha Lake Stewards Association has put out an excellent document called Aquatic Plants Guide. It is available on line www.lakefieldherald.com/KLSA/PlantGuide .

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