



<http://www.cumauriceriver.org>

Parrotfeather

Give them an inch and they'll take an acre. I'm talking about a plant called *Myriophyllum aquaticum* or parrotfeather. This handsome plant is one of the more aggressive invasive species on the east coast.

This 'insidious occupation' creates a number of problems: It can clog whole bodies of water; flood farmers' irrigation ditches, choke out much-needed algae; displace plants that feed our populations of fish; prohibit fishing, kayaking and swimming, and, harbor disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Parrotfeather was originally introduced into our country as an outdoor pond and aquarium plant. Its arrival to our region came unannounced and uninvited: In September 2009, a 2-mile infestation of this plant was discovered on the Menantico Creek in Vineland. It's quite possible, that a small portion of this exotic plant may have been carried by a bird from an outdoor pond, and deposited in a nearby stream. Through a process known as 'fragmentation', any part of the parrotfeather that breaks off can put new roots down somewhere else.

Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries; the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the City of Vineland; and, the Vineland Environmental Commission are working together to remove this 'visitor'.

The best way to stop the spreading of parrotfeather is simply to stop planting it. Other lovely native plants offer sensible alternatives for regional landscaping.