

MENYANTHES TRIFOLIATA L.
Buckbean

FAMILY: Menyanthaceae.

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial with creeping rootstalk, 1-3 dm.; flowering late April-early May; fruiting May, June.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Menyanthes trifoliata* is a distinctive species when in flower. Vegetative material might be confused with a three-leaflet member of the Leguminosae. However, no similar legume occupies the same habitat as *Menyanthes trifoliata*.

TOTAL RANGE: Circumboreal; s. to NJ, VA, OH, IN, MO, and CA.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 records from Licking, Logan, Portage, Richland, Summit, Warren, and Wayne counties. There are pre-1980 records from Ashland, Ashtabula, Champaign, Franklin, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, and Stark counties.

HABITAT: Acidic or calcareous waters such as bogs, quarries, shallow water and pond margins. Often confined to the outer edge of the floating sphagnum mat.

HAZARDS: Destruction of habitat; draining of bogs, development of shoreline.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown; possibly susceptible to change in nutrient level from runoff carrying fertilizer from surrounding fields.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect flowering or fruiting material only; avoid over-collecting. *Menyanthes trifoliata* often grows in mixed populations with *Calla palustris*. All thick populations of *Calla* should be investigated for the presence of buckbean.

COMMENTS: This species formerly was widespread over glaciated Ohio, but now is restricted to fewer than 10 populations, many of which contain very few individuals. Also, the Ohio plants frequently do not bloom.

Buckbean may be unreported from some areas because it grows in the most inaccessible portions of bogs. It should be sought in appropriate habitats throughout its former range.

Fernald (1929) states that this taxon is represented in the United States by *Menyanthes trifoliata* L. var. *minor* Raf., and that the typical variety does not occur in North America. The major difference between the two varieties is flower color. Most recent authors do not distinguish these varieties.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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