

LITCHFIELD

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## [Class offered on identifying invasive lake plants](#)

Kennebec Journal Staff

LITCHFIELD -- A free class on how to identify invasive plant species in local lakes is being offered.

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Members of the Tacoma Lakes Invasive Plant Patrol identify plant fragments as they work to spot plant species that might harm Woodbury Pond in Litchfield. From left, the patrol members are Diane Clay, Buffy DeMatteis and Susie Wilding-Hartford.

Contributed photo

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The introductory Invasive Plant Patrol class -- 3 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. June 27, at Carrie Ricker Middle School -- is being hosted by Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society, Friends of Cobbossee Watershed and Litchfield Conservation Commission.

Officials at the organizations are hoping a number of people enroll and become invasive-plant patrollers.

Once such group of three Litchfield women has been taking plant identification classes together since 2004 through the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program in Auburn.

During the later part of each summer, the three scan the underwater world of aquatic plants on one of the Tacoma Lakes.

"With trained eyes and scopes, we search for what we never want to find -- invasive aquatic plants," DeMatteis said. "So far, so good. In this chain of five ponds, we have only identified dozens of good old native plants."

DeMatteis said the group needs more trained eyes on the water so the entire lakeshore can be surveyed each year.

They are hoping to gain more team members and assign pairs to particular sections of the lakeshore.

DeMatteis said the survey became more important after an infestation of variable leaf milfoil was discovered last summer in Purgatory Stream, the outlet from the Tacoma Lakes chain.

"This is just too close for comfort," she said.

The current team consists of Diane Clay, Susie Wilding-Hartford and DeMatteis.

People interest in learning about invasive plants can sign up for the class through the Internet at [www.mainevlmp.org/](http://www.mainevlmp.org/) or by phone at 783-7783.

DeMatteis said food will be provided during the class and volunteers also get several books to help with the work.

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