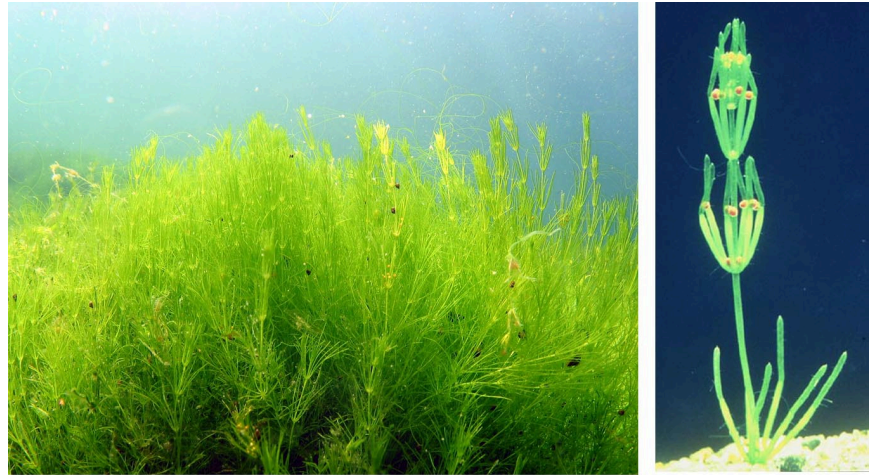


Charophyte meadow

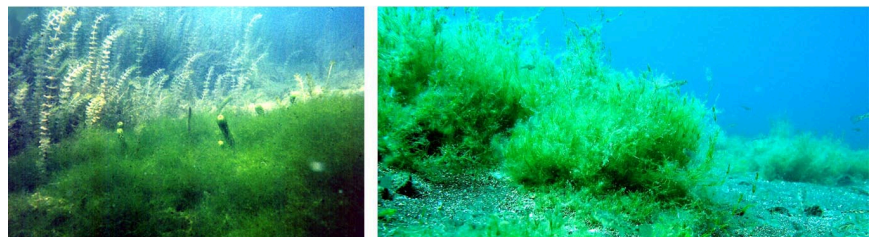
Description

- Highly developed macroalgae, which lack true leaves and stems (no vascular tissue).
- The 'stems' are single celled and are sometimes enclosed by another layer of cells (two species of *Chara* only).
- The main 'stem' of charophytes bears whorls of branchlets, which are clustered at regularly spaced intervals.
- Some species of *Chara* are easily identifiable by the strong musky smell.
- Most are bright green in colour.
- Can form 'meadows' across the bed of lakes to depth exceeding 20m. (LakeSPI charophyte meadows = >75% cover of charophytes)



Similar species

Not to be confused with Milfoil species or short stunted forms of *Ceratophyllum demersum*.



Presence in New Zealand

Widespread throughout New Zealand.

Management Value

Charophyte species have been identified as key submerged plant indicators for the assessment of lake ecological condition using LakeSPI. Charophyte meadows (>75% cover of charophytes) are also recognised in LakeSPI as providing additional value to the indicator system.

Included Species

Includes all species of *Nitella* and *Chara*. Including:

Chara australis
Chara fibrosa
Chara globularis
Nitella sp. aff. *cristata*
Nitella psuedoflabellata
Nitella stuartii
Nitella hyalina
Nitella claytonii