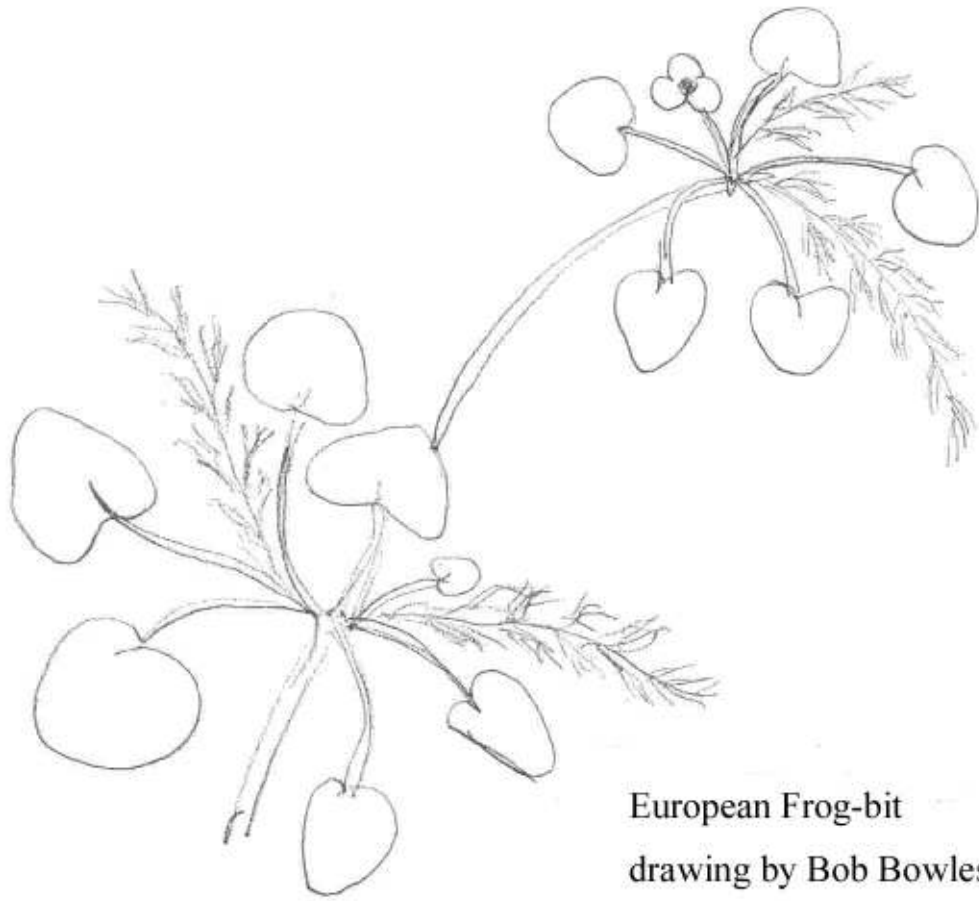




Kids For Turtles Environmental Education Invasive Species by Bob Bowles

European frog-bit
(*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*)

European frog-bit is a free-floating aquatic plant that resembles a miniature water lily and belongs to the family *Hydrocharitaceae* (Frog-bit Family) resembling American frog-bit (*Limnobium spongia*). Originally from Europe and Asia, it is currently found primarily in eastern Ontario and isolated locations in central and western Ontario. It was first introduced as a horticultural species to the Ottawa region in 1939 and then spread to the nearby Rideau Canal and Brown's inlet. It is now found along the north and south shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie in marshes. There have been reports in Balsam Lake on the Trent-Severn Waterway so it is just a matter of time before it is found in Lake Simcoe. It has a single flower 1.5 cm. in diameter with three rounded white petals and a yellow centre. The leaves about the size of a toonie are round to heart-shaped with veins coming off the mid-vein. The back of the leaves have a dark purple, spongy coating which enables the leaves to float on the water surface. The plant spreads from stolons or runners coming from the centre of the plant and produces winter buds called turions which break off and lie dormant on the bottom during winter. In the spring they float to the surface and produce a seedling. One plant can produce 150 turions which form new plants in dense mats choking water systems. It can also reproduce sexually like other plants. It prefers calcium-rich water and grows where there is limited wave action in quiet bays or wetlands. To learn more about the environment and protecting the world around us join Kids For Turtles Environmental Education. Information can be found at www.kidsforturtles.com or email info@kidsforturtles.com. Family membership for 2008 is only \$15, call 325-3149. Your support is so important to us to continue our environmental education and outreach work.



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drawing by Bob Bowles