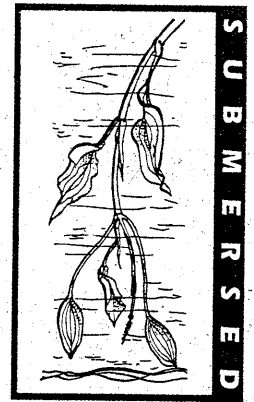


SUBMERSED PLANTS
WITH ENTIRE
LEAVES - ALTERNATE
OR BASAL



leaf venation
with no
prominent
midvein
3 x life-size



Zosterella dubia (Zoster-EL-a DEW-bee-a)

(formerly known as *Heteranthera dubia*)

Water stargrass

Zosterella - (L.) *zostera*: eelgrass (a marine plant with flat leaves) + *ella* - little one; *dubia* - doubtful

The bright yellow flowers of water stargrass swirled on the surface like music box dancers. For a moment, an emerald damselfly hovered and darted near the star-flowered plant.

Description: Water stargrass has slender,

freely branched stems that emerge from a buried rhizome. The narrow, alternate leaves (up to 15 cm long, 2-6 mm wide) attach directly to the stem with no leaf stalk and lack a prominent midvein.

Yellow, star-shaped flowers are produced individually. The capsular fruit (about 1 cm long) contains 7-30 seeds.

Similar species: This star-flowered

plant is often mistaken for a pondweed, yet it is actually part of the pickerelweed family (*Pontederiaceae*). The narrow, alternate leaves of water stargrass can look like a flat-stem pondweed (*Potamogeton zosteriformis*) or small pondweed (*Potamogeton pusillus*) at first glance.

However, the leaves of water stargrass lack a definite midvein and when it is in flower, the yellow blossoms clearly separate *Zosterella* from the pondweeds.

Origin & Range: Native; common in Wisconsin; range includes most of U.S.

Habitat: Water stargrass grows in a

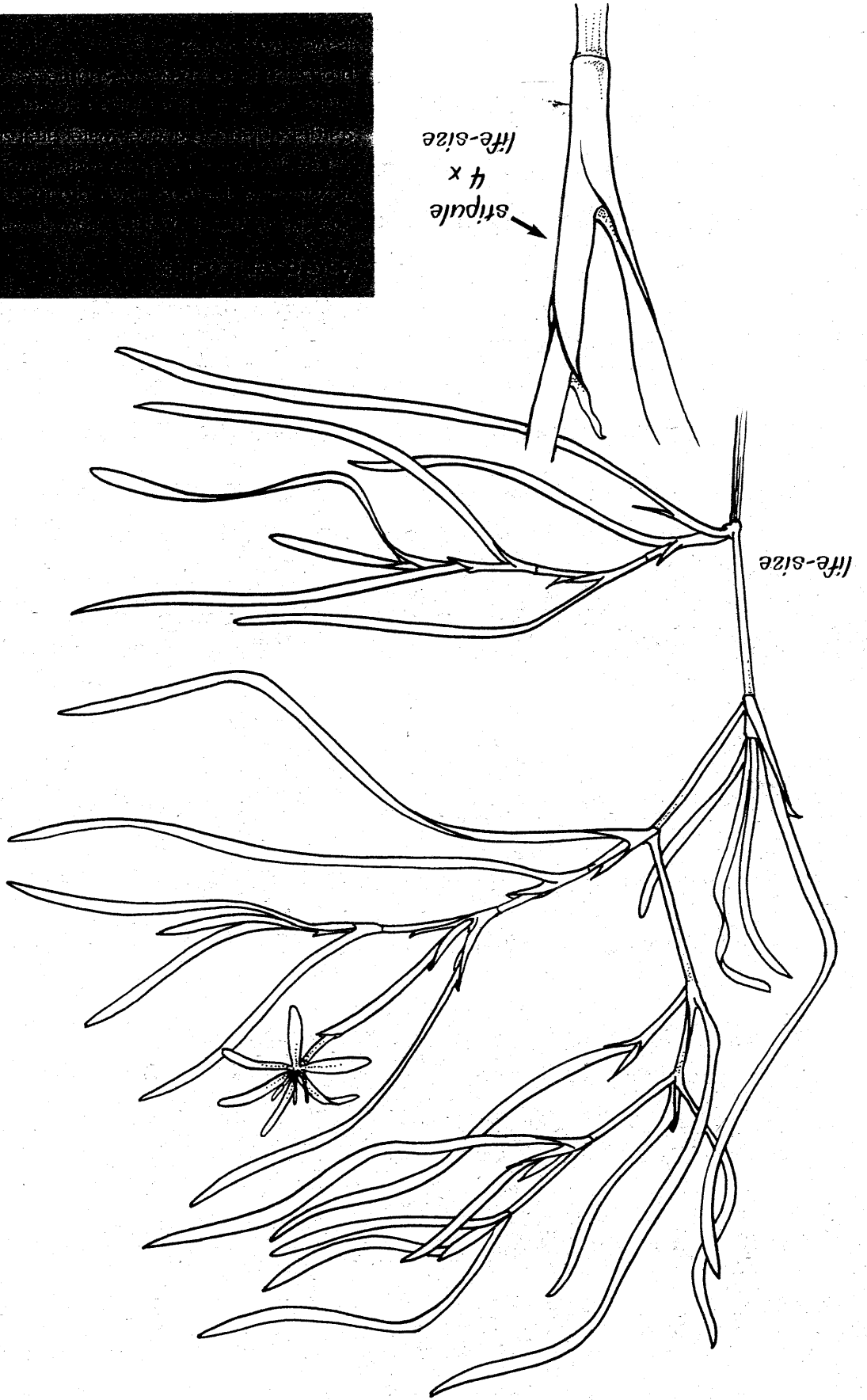
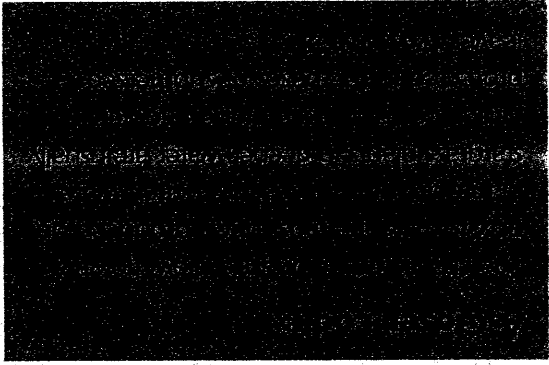
variety of water depths, from very shallow to several meters deep. It can succeed in a range of sediment types and will tolerate reduced water clarity.

Through the Year: Water stargrass

overwinters by hardy rhizomes. There is also some limited reproduction from seed when conditions are favorable. Flowering occurs in midsummer with fruit developing by fall. Stems and leaves die back as the water cools late in the season.

Value in the Aquatic Community:

Water stargrass can be a locally important source of food for geese and ducks including northern pintail, blue-winged teal and wood duck. It also offers good cover and foraging opportunities for fish.



life-size
4 x
stipule

life-size