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## Resistant 'Zombie' plant alive and thriving within Lafontaine Park

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There's some greenery in the park that the city wants to stamp out before it spreads.

Lafontaine Park become a breeding ground for Eurasian Watermilfoil, an invasive underwater plant that the city is trying to eradicate.

It's been around for decades and grows in still or slow-moving water. Because it's widely distributed and difficult to control, the plant is considered especially problematic.

### PHOTOS



Unlike blue-green algae, this resistant plant isn't dangerous for humans or animals – it's more of an annoyance for people hoping to swim with untickled feet. (CTV Montreal)

And with a nickname like “the Zombie plant,” you know that it's going to put up its fair share of resistance.

It's called the Zombie plant because if you break it in half, both ends can grow into a brand new plant-- this makes it very hard to get rid of.

“Even a small piece can grow into a full plant, so that makes it particularly successful,” said Yves Prairie of the Universite de Montreal's biology department.

Once it gets into a body of water, it can spread quickly to others nearby. The issue with Lafontaine Park lies in the size of the territory—the bigger the space, the more potential there is for the plant to take over and mar the natural fauna.

Often, the plant's seeds stick to the legs of ducks and other waterfowl, and it's the birds that distribute the seeds.

Water currents can also carry these fragments to other parts of the body of water, where they will colonize.

Unlike blue-green algae, the resistant plant isn't dangerous for humans or animals – it's more of an annoyance for people hoping to swim with untickled feet.

In Quebec, Watermilfoil is especially prevalent in the Laurentians and the Eastern Townships.

“Some cottagers don't like it very much, because when you swim you can feel it,” Prairie explained. “There were similar plants and you can see the swimmers didn't like it.”

City officials in Sudbury, Ontario spent \$175,000 in an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the pesky plant.

A company hired by the City of Montreal installed a fiberglass mesh to block sunlight and suffocate the plant—a tarp the size of the one currently in use costs an average of \$5,000.

Other methods include harvesting, installation of bottom barriers, diver hand pulling, and dredging.