

Have You Seen This Plant?

This species is highly invasive and has become a serious pest in other states. In summer 2007 it was documented in a private artificial pond in Marinette County, Wisconsin. It has not been reported in any natural lakes or rivers in Wisconsin. The spread of this species in Wisconsin would be harmful to aquatic ecosystems and recreational activities. We will need to respond quickly if it is found in other locations, and we need your help keeping watch. If you know of or suspect occurrences of this plant, please contact the **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at (608) 267-3531**. For more photos and information, see our website dnr.wi.gov/invasives/fact/hydrilla.htm.



Photo by MI Sea Grant
miseagrnt.umich.edu/ais/plants.html

Hydrilla stem with leaf whorls

HYDRILLA

(*Hydrilla verticillata*)

DESCRIPTION

Hydrilla is a prolific, rapidly-growing submerged aquatic plant that can thrive in water from a few inches to 20 feet deep. Leaves are small (1/2 - 3/4 inches), triangular-pointed and occur in whorls of 4 to 8 leaves along the stem. Unlike many native water plants, hydrilla leaves have serrated edges and one or more protruding barbs or bumps along the midrib on the underside. They are usually green but may bleach in the sun to yellow or brown. Stems are heavily branched near the surface and grow horizontally, forming dense mats of vegetation. Small tubers are present at the rooted base of the plant.



Hydrilla leaf showing teeth on margins and midrib

LOOK-ALIKES

Hydrilla is often confused with native waterweeds (*Elodea canadensis* and *Elodea nuttallii*), the leaves of which -- typically in whorls of 3 -- appear smooth-edged and lack spines on the midrib. It also resembles the invasive Brazilian waterweed (*Egeria densa*), which is not yet in Wisconsin and has finely serrated longer leaves (3/4 to 1-1/2 inches) in whorls of 3 to 6. Proper identification is essential—if you believe you may have found this plant in Wisconsin, contact the Department of Natural Resources to confirm your finding.

HABITS & HABITAT

Hydrilla - a native of Africa - was brought to the U.S. as an aquarium plant. It is now widespread in southern states and has been reported as far north as Maine, Washington and Indiana. Hydrilla has several methods of reproduction. Within a water body, branch or root fragments from broken plants can drift to new areas. Also, it can spread to new locations from plant fragments attached to boats and trailers. Turions - tiny, compact buds, which form in leaf axils along the stem - break free and drift to new areas. Tubers, which form on the roots and can lie dormant for several years, can propagate new plants. Hydrilla can grow in a wide range of conditions, including low light, flowing or still waters, shallow or deep. It out-competes the widespread invasive Eurasian water-milfoil with its even more rapid growth and reproduction. It is a serious threat to lakes and streams everywhere because of its adaptability.

PREVENTION

Boaters and other water users can help prevent the spread of hydrilla by inspecting their boats and equipment each time they leave a water body and removing all visible mud and plant fragments. These steps are important for all Wisconsin water users, but are especially critical for people who use their boats and equipment in locations where hydrilla is known to occur.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specieId=22

US Department of Agriculture invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatics/hydrilla.shtml

DNR PUB WT-884

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