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Hydrilla on the Move

The Water Resources Group
Progressive AE

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Be on the lookout! A non-native aquatic plant called hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) is moving north and threatening our lakes and waterways. Hydrilla was imported into Florida as an aquarium plant in the 1950's. The plant was released into the environment and has since spread to hundreds of waterbodies in over 20 states. In 2023, Hydrilla was discovered for the first time in Southwest Michigan. Hydrilla is extremely fast-growing and tends to form thick mats that can seriously hinder swimming, boating, and fishing. It will often shade out and replace native aquatic plants. When hydrilla becomes over-abundant, imbalances in fish populations can also occur.

Hydrilla is a highly invasive plant that can spread by seed, turions (winter buds), tubers, and plant fragments. Some waterfowl feed on the plant and can spread seeds and tubers into other bodies of water. Tubers and turions can remain viable in the sediment and sustain drought conditions. Fragments of the plant are able to root and grow into new plants. These plant fragments can be transported to new waters via boats and fishing equipment.

Early detection and rapid response is essential to controlling the spread of hydrilla. Several states have implemented control programs in an attempt to halt the spread of the plant. On Lake Manitou, a 735-acre lake in Indiana, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources implemented a quarantine following the discovery of hydrilla in 2006. Both public and private boat ramps were closed and an aggressive multiple-year herbicide treatment program was initiated with the goal of eradicating the plant. The herbicide treatment plan and access restrictions combined a total of 10 years of heavy management. Since 2016, hydrilla has not been found in Lake Manitou and the spread of the invasive species from the lake appears to be minimal.



Hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata
Photo by Vjc Ramey
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HELP STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!



Avoid spreading aquatic invasive species.
Recommended Actions:

- ✓ **CLEAN** boats, trailers and equipment
- ✓ **DRAIN** live wells, bilges and all water
- ✓ **DRY** boats and equipment
- ✓ **DISPOSE** of unwanted bait in the trash

IT'S THE LAW

Violation of the law is a state civil infraction. Violators may be subject to fines.

DO NOT launch or transport watercraft or trailers unless they are free of aquatic organisms, including plants.

DO NOT transport a watercraft without securing all drain plugs and draining all water from bilges, ballast tanks, and live wells.

DO NOT release animal bait into the water.

Michigan.gov/InvasiveSpecies





If you think you see hydrilla in your lake, contact the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) at 517-284-5593 or email EGLE-WRD-ANC@Michigan.gov. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/invasives.




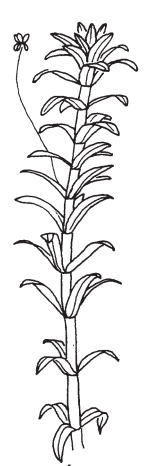
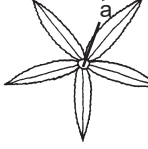
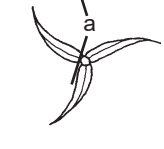
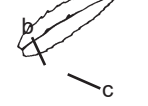
Hydrilla closely resembles elodea which is one of our common and beneficial native plants. Hydrilla is an exotic plant that, to date, has only established limited populations in two private ponds in Southwest Michigan. However, the range of hydrilla infestation in the US is expanding. Hydrilla is prevalent in Ohio and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has been working towards managing the spread of the invasive species.

Managing hydrilla involves the use of herbicides, mechanical harvesting, and sterile grass carp. While some control is offered through these management strategies, prevention should be the primary focus for lake managers and riparians.



The spread of aquatic invasive species can be reduced by following the guidelines presented by the Clean Boats Clean Waters program offered through Michigan State University Extension. It is encouraged to clean, drain, and dry before and after launching into any inland lake.

To learn more about the program, visit: canr.msu.edu/clean_boats_clean_waters/

HYDRILLA	ELODEA
	
	
a	a
	
b	b
	
c	c
<p>a. 4 or 5 leaves encircle the stem</p> <p>b. Leaves are "toothed"</p> <p>c. Leaf vein has small spines</p>	<p>a. Only 3 leaves encircle the stem</p> <p>b. Leaf edges appear smooth</p> <p>c. Leaf vein is smooth underneath</p>

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Progressive AE created MichiganLakeInfo.com, a website for those interested in Michigan's inland lakes. On the site you can find this article and information on topics such as lake water quality, watershed management, aquatic plants, lake levels, lake improvement boards and more.