

HYDRILLA (*Hydrilla verticillata*)



Native range:

Uncertain but possibly Asia, India, Australia or central Africa

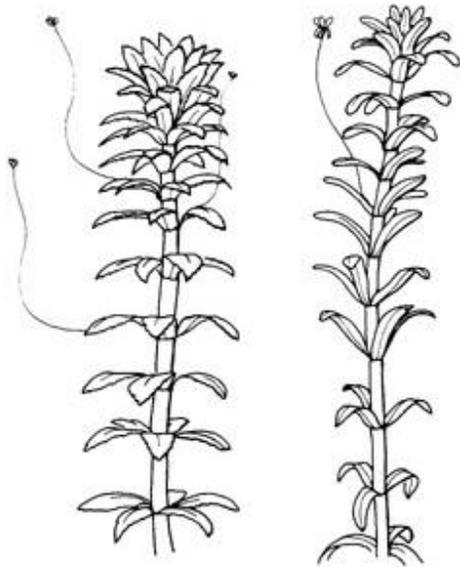
Characteristics:

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.

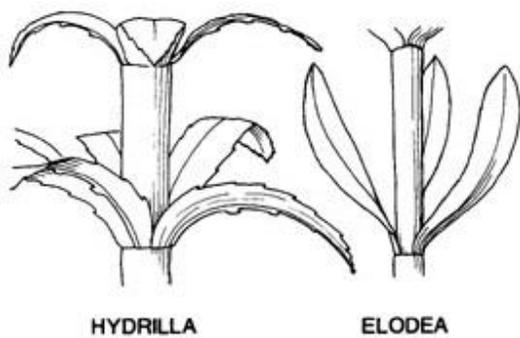
Hydrilla has several methods of reproduction. Within a water body, branch or root fragments from broken plants can drift to new areas. Also, it can spread to new locations from plant fragments attached to boats and trailers. Turions - tiny, compact buds which form in leaf axils along the stem - break free and drift to new areas. Studies at the University of Minnesota have indicated that the turions of the monoecious form are likely to survive in northern climates. The dioecious form appears to be less cold tolerant. 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.

- Hydrilla spreads to new waters mainly as fragments on boats and trailers
- Dense Hydrilla infestations can alter water chemistry and oxygen levels (Pesacreta 1988)
- Millions of dollars are spent each year on herbicides and mechanical harvesters in Florida alone in an effort to place Hydrilla under "maintenance control"
- In Russia, Hydrilla grows to 50o N latitude--equivalent to the US/Canadian border

Methods of early detection:



Hydrilla is often confused with Waterweed (*Elodea Canadensis*), a very common native plant in Wisconsin lakes. Hydrilla leaves are slightly serrated and in whorls of 4 to 8 around the stem. Elodea leaves are smooth edged and occur in whorls of 3 around the stem.



HYDRILLA

ELODEA