

THIS INVASIVE SPECIES IS NOW INFESTING WATERS IN THE NORTHEAST USA

# HYDRILLA

Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) is an invasive submerged perennial that looks similar to native waterweed and is considered the most problematic aquatic plant in the United States. It spreads rapidly and can completely clog waterways by restricting water flow. It also poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems as well as recreational resources. Under the right conditions hydrilla can take over a waterbody by forming dense mats that shade and displace native aquatic plants. Hydrilla has not been found within Lake George yet, but improper cleaning of gear and boats may provide this invasive a route into the Queen of American Lakes.

Hydrilla is tolerant to a wide range of environmental conditions. It thrives in both high and low nutrient rich waters. It tolerates a wide range of pH, and salinity levels. Hydrilla alters the water quality by raising the pH and



Hydrilla grows in a thick mat and in southern states, such as Florida, where it has completely overwhelmed many inland lakes.

decreasing the dissolved oxygen. Hydrilla typically occurs in dense rooted stands or in floating mats in a few inches of water to more than 20 feet deep.

Hydrilla has visibly toothed leaves that grow in whorls of 3-8. The underside of the leaves may have one or more spines. The midrib of each leaf is sometimes red in color and has small white flowers that rise to the surface on slender stalks. Hydrilla sprouts from overwintering tubers, turions (overwintering buds), and rhizomes. It can grow very rapidly, about 2 cm per day. The tubers can remain dormant for several years and can withstand ice cover, drying,

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# Hydrilla

## LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

ingestion, and herbicides. Hydrilla can also reproduce rapidly by stems and root fragments. There are two distinct biotypes, the dioecious (plant contains either male or female parts) southern form and the monoecious (plant contains both male and female parts) northern form.

Hydrilla is native to Africa, Australia, and parts of Asia. It is thought to have been introduced to the United States through the aquarium trade in the mid 1950s. It has been confirmed that this invasive has spread throughout northeastern states including Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and as of 2008 New York State.

Hydrilla is a major problem in Florida where control and management of this plant has cost millions of dollars. It's a major problem in many other southern states. Many techniques have been used to manage this invasive including mechanical removal, habitat manipulation, biological agents, and herbicides. An effective way to permanently eliminate infestations has not been found; emphasis must be on prevention.

Here are the best ways to prevent the spread of Hydrilla to Lake George:



Information in this Fact Sheet was provided in part by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program.

Hydrilla has been found in New York as well as other northeast states close to Lake George, such as Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

- Check and remove all clinging plants from gear, equipment and watercrafts;
- Never release aquarium plants into the wild;
- Use native or noninvasive plants in ornamental ponds and water gardens; and,
- Avoid boating through dense beds of plants.

**We need your help to protect Lake George from invasive species.**

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