Hydrilla is a highly invasive aquatic plant that threatens the health of New York State’s lakes and rivers and impacts fishing, boating, and swimming. It’s very easily confused with Brazilian elodea (another invasive aquatic plant) and American elodea (a native plant). If you think you’ve seen hydrilla or Brazilian elodea, please photograph it and let us know right away! See the reverse side of this sheet for contact information.

Hydrilla is extremely well adapted for competing in an aquatic environment. It grows quite rapidly – up to one inch a day! Once hydrilla reaches the water’s surface, it can quickly produce a dense mat of stems that crowds out desirable native pants. Within the past few years, hydrilla has been discovered in several counties in New York. Early detection could save the state millions of dollars in control costs and prevent many recreational and ecological impacts. Please help identify this plant early on when populations are still small enough to eradicate and manage!

**HOW TO IDENTIFY HYDRILLA**

Hydrilla may be visible in water from mid-June to December. In the early phase of growth, it travels along the bottom of a waterbody and then through the water column to the surface. Each plant produces many stems. Whorls of more than three leaves grow along each stem. A whorl is a series of leaves that grows around the stem at the same distance from the stem’s end. Leaves have toothed edges and a mid-vein with visible spines.

Hydrilla produces tubers (small potato-like storage structures) that grow in the sediment of lakes and rivers. Each tuber can produce a new plant. Tubers are less than ½-inch long and can live for many years.

Tubers overwinter and grow into hydrilla plants.

Tubers are small and can easily be overlooked.
LOOK ALIKES

Although hydrilla resembles invasive Brazilian and native American elodea, neither of these plants produces tubers.

Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata)

- Invasive
- Whorls of more than 3 leaves
- Leaves often have visibly toothed edge
- Leaf vein often has small visible spines

Brazilian elodea (Egeria densa)

- Invasive
- Whorls of more than 3 leaves
- Leaves do not have visibly toothed edge
- Leaf vein is smooth underneath

American elodea (Elodea canadensis)

- Native
- Whorls of exactly 3 leaves
- Leaves do not have visibly toothed edge
- Leaf vein is smooth underneath

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you think you’ve found hydrilla or Brazilian elodea, please use your phone or digital camera to take one or two close-up photos of the plant stem by placing it on a light-colored background. Then please discard the plant fragment in the trash.

Email your photos to DEC at isinfo@dec.ny.gov

We will acknowledge your email and let you know whether your photo is of either kind of invasive hydrilla. If you cannot send us a digital picture, email us and we will contact you. Thank you!

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about hydrilla, please visit http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/104790.html

Many thanks to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership for the content and photos on this sheet.