HYDRILLA
Hydrilla verticillata

Be on the lookout for this invader!

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Description: Aquatic, submergent perennial, at depths of up to 20 feet. Leaves with finely serrated margins, typically occur in whorls of five around the stem, whereas the native *Elodea* has three leaves per whorl and no teeth on the leaf margins. Hydrilla can quickly overwhelm waterways, causing severe ecological and economic impacts. It can grow up to an inch per day and forms large, dense mats near the water surface that block recreational access, impede drainage and restrict water movement, causing sediment to accumulate. Considered by many to be the most problematic aquatic plant in the United States.

Habitat: Occurs in slow-moving water of lakes, ponds, streams and rivers; tolerates a wide range of water quality conditions.

Mode of Spread: Spread vegetatively, by fragments and tubers; dispersed by waterfowl and boats.

IDENTIFICATION

STEM

LEAVES

TUBERS

Photo: Leslie Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut , Bugwood.org

Photos: Robert Vidéki, Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org

Stems: Usually rooted in water up to 20 ft. deep; little branching in deep water but dense at water's surface; forms horizontal stems in water (stolons) and sediments (rhizomes).

Leaves: Whorls of five thin, rough leaves at the node, up to 0.5" long, small spines give the leaf margin a toothed appearance, midribs red and often spiny. Native *Elodea* typically has three leaves in each whorl.

Flowers: Female flowers are small, white, six- parted, and occur from leaf axils; male flowers are green in color and resemble an inverted bell.

Known to occur at these locations in Northern Michigan:
Not yet found in Michigan. Hydrilla was found in Lake Manitou, Indiana in 2006, approximately 50 miles from the Michigan border, but has been successfully contained thus far.

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