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HYDRILLA MANAGEMENT TIPS

Hydrilla, a member of the Frog's-bit family, is a submerged, rooted aquatic perennial forb. The stems are slender with branching occurring near the water surface. The small green leaves are whorled in bunches of three to eight and have saw-toothed margins. The flowers are solitary, tiny, white and float on the water surface. Hydrilla is usually found in shallow waters of lakes, ponds, streams, rivers and wet ditches, but may also occur in water that is greater than 23 feet deep. Hydrilla can form tall and dense stands in the water column, preventing sunlight penetration, displacing other aquatic vegetation, and impeding water flow and withdrawals for power generation and agricultural irrigation. Heavy growth commonly hinders swimming, boating, fishing and other recreational activities.



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Education and prevention are the main priorities for hydrilla. Thoroughly wash all watercraft and other recreational equipment and remove any plant parts that are attached to boat trailers, boat props, and other watercraft and dispose of the plant material away from the shore of the water body. This will help minimize the spread of aquatic noxious weeds from one water body to another.

Effective control measures for the management of hydrilla include:

- 1. Mechanical (hand pulling):** Hand pulling and diver operated suction are options for small infestations but will have to be repeated as the plants grow back. Bottom barriers have also been used around docks and boat ramps to kill or reduce hydrilla. As sediment accumulates to about 1.5 inches on the barriers, they will have to be cleaned to prevent fragments from taking root.
- 2. Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law! In Montana, a 308 permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality is required to intentionally apply aquatic herbicides to water.** Herbicides can be used in some circumstances to control hydrilla, but applying herbicides to surface water safely and effectively requires specialized knowledge and training. Aquatic herbicides usually require two or more hours of contact time with the plant and therefore are ineffective in flowing water.
- 3. Integrated management:** Management of hydrilla is more effective when more than one strategy is used.