

Hydrilla *(Hydrilla verticillata)*

Currently in Montana, noxious weed infest about 8.2 million acres. Many of these state listed noxious weeds were brought to America as ornamentals for gardens, medicinal purposes, by accident in discarded soil from a ship's ballast, or unintentionally in bags of seed brought from other parts of the world. Whatever the cause of introduction non-native plant species have found their way onto Montana's state listed noxious weed list.

Hydrilla can tolerate many different types of habitat types but does not thrive in fast moving waters. One notable characteristic of this plant that helps it establish over native species is that it can thrive in extremely shady conditions.

There are two types of hydrilla plants. The type that is suspected to occur in Montana is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are produced on different plants and is thought to have come from India.

The stems of these plants are very thin and can grow to lengths of up to 30' in length. The leaves of this plant only 5/8" long. Leaves have saw-toothed margins with pointed tips, and are present on the plant in whorls of 4-8. The leaves are usually green in color and are translucent. The female and male flowers of this plant have different appearances; the female flowers float on the water's surface from a thin threadlike stalk. The small, singular female flowers have six petals, the male flowers are very small and green, submerged, break free and float to the surface for pollination. Upon pollination, tiny seeds about 1/16" in length are produced. Other ways of reproduction include stem fragments, rhizomes, tubers and turions.

Hydrilla is an aquatic invasive plant and is very difficult to control because it can reproduce through four different methods. Hydrilla has not been found in Montana; however it is a Priority 3 regulated species and not a state listed noxious weed. The reason hydrilla appears as a priority 3 regulated species is because it has been found in several states that border Montana.

Please take a few moments to learn about noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are not currently a problem in your area, they may be in the near future. For more information about Montana's state listed noxious weeds, regulated plants, or weed species listed on your county weed list, please contact your local county weed district **(can list weed district name here... ex: Lewis & Clark County Weed District)** at **_(406)_ (Phone number)_**. Or you can contact the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-5600.