

Boaters: the first line of defense in control of hydrilla

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It's the close of summer, but it's never too late to remind all boaters everywhere about the spread of hydrilla throughout the nation's waterways.

Hydrilla is one of the most troublesome aquatic weeds that infests our lakes. It was first discovered in Florida in 1960 and has spread rapidly through portions of the United States, clogging our waterways (see distribution

control structures, and impede waterway navigation and recreational usage.

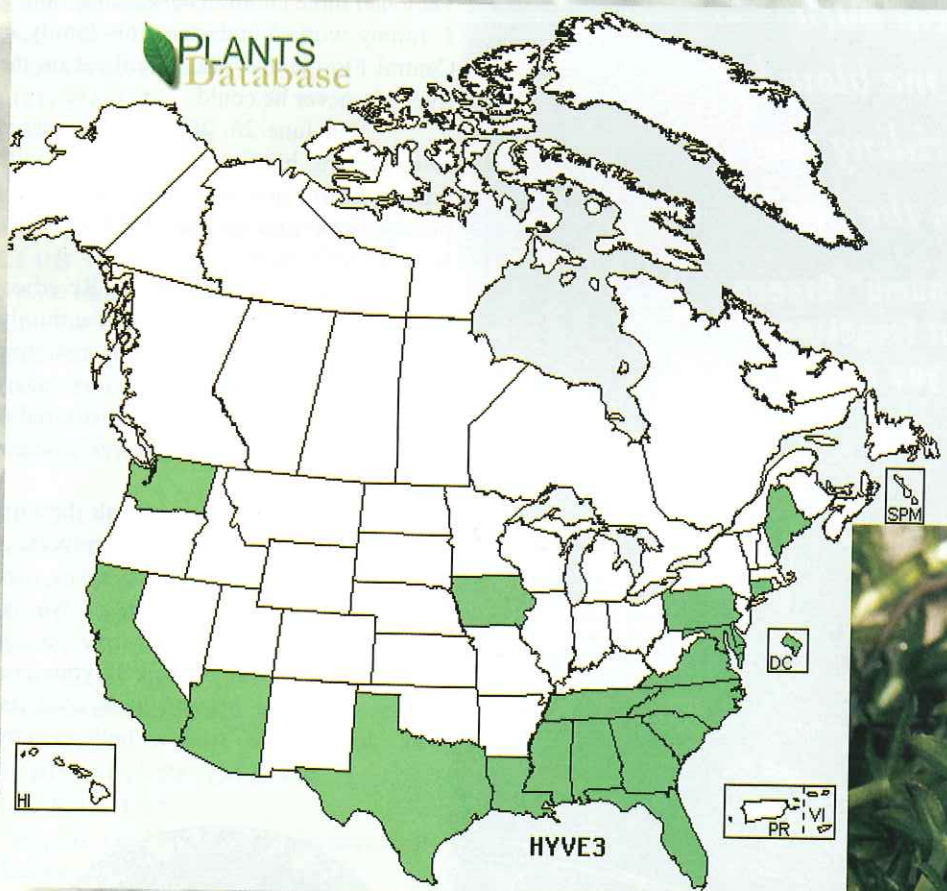
It is very difficult to control hydrilla because it spreads easily from fragments breaking off and producing new plants. Boats and fishing equipment can easily spread this weed from one lake to another. *Boaters can help prevent the spread of hydrilla by always removing plants from boating equipment, including your trailer, before leaving the water body.*

Managing hydrilla has become a challenging task and aquatic plant managers have had to incorporate new management strategies. Many large lakes in Florida are now populated with a strain

of hydrilla resistant to the main aquatic herbicide (fluridone, a.k.a. Sonar™) used to manage it for the past 20 years. Managers are in need of additional tools to keep hydrilla under control.

Osceola County, Florida is working with the University of Florida, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and SePRO Corporation on a four-year Demonstration Project to find alternative methods to control hydrilla and another aquatic weed, hygrophylla. They are currently evaluating new herbicides and searching for natural enemies (biological control agents) for controlling the plants.

One of the main components of the Demonstration Project is education and outreach. We hope to raise awareness among lake users so they can recognize these problematic weeds and help prevent their spread. We also hope to alert lake users to the challenges we all face from invasive aquatic weeds and why they need to be managed. You can help by learning more about invasive aquatic plants and then telling your family, friends and neighbors. Visit our website at <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>



map). In its native range of Asia, hydrilla is kept in check by natural conditions, however in the U.S. it is able to explode and overwhelm our waters. If left unmanaged, hydrilla is capable of creating damaging infestations which can choke out native plants, clog flood

Close-up view of hydrilla. Courtesy of University of Florida, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants.

