

# Hydrilla: An Emerging Concern for the Albemarle Region

Photo: Steve Hoyle, NC State University



One of the world's most invasive plants, *Hydrilla*, is being found throughout North Carolina, including the Albemarle region.

*Hydrilla* spreads easily and forms dense stands, which can:

- Obstruct boating, swimming and fishing;
- Clog drainage and irrigation canals;
- Displace native plants; and
- Harm tourism and waterfront-property values.

## What is *Hydrilla*?

**Scientific Name:** *Hydrilla verticillata*

**Native To:** Asia

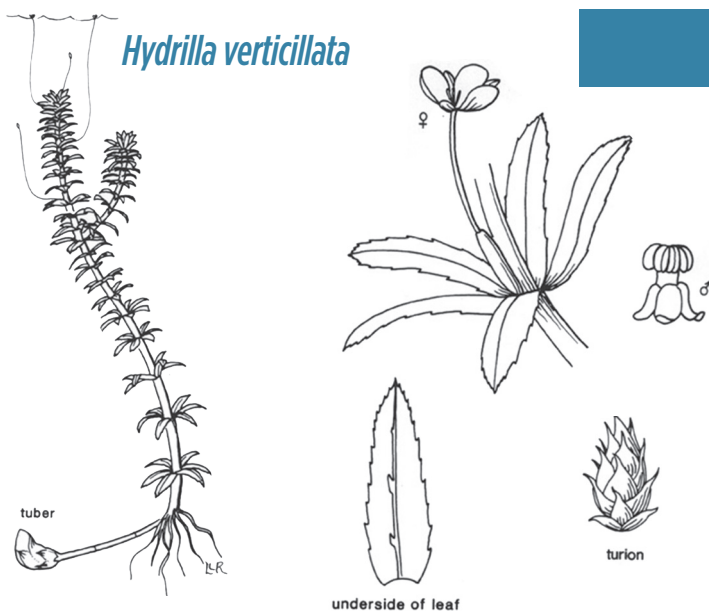
**Distribution In North Carolina:** Several water bodies and their tributaries in northeastern North Carolina, including the Chowan River, Roanoke River, Edenton Bay and western reaches of the Albemarle Sound.

**How It Grows:** *Hydrilla*, a herbaceous perennial, dies back (senesces) in the fall and roots in the bottom of ponds, canals, lakes, streams and rivers. It can grow stems up to 20 feet long and forms thick, dense mats.

**How It Spreads:** *Hydrilla* spreads by seeds, buds, tubers and fragments. It stores energy in pea-sized underground tubers that persist through the winter and sprout in the spring. The tubers can remain viable in sediment for at least six years. *Hydrilla* also can produce “buds” at the axil or where the leaf joins the stem. The buds can break off and settle in the soil or move downstream.



Monitoring: Trained volunteers and professionals map current infestations and look for new populations.



## What Does *Hydrilla* Look Like?

- Color is bright green.
- Tubers form in soil.
- Small leaves measure about 5/8 inches long.
- Leaves have teeth around the edges.
- Leaves grow along the thin, long stems arranged in whorls of 3 to 8 but most commonly 5.

## Help Stop the Spread

### When boating:

- Inspect your watercraft and trailer and remove plant material. Pay special attention to areas that stay wet (bilge, live well, etc.).
- Dispose of all plant matter in the trash or on dry land well **above high water**. *Hydrilla* cannot tolerate drying out.

### Around docks, launch sites and other areas:

- Weeding *Hydrilla* is discouraged because it easily fragments.
- If you remove it, collect all fragments to prevent them from drifting.
- Dispose of plants well above the water line.

**Report suspected new populations of *Hydrilla*.**

**Tell others about *Hydrilla*.**



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To learn more, report an infestation or get involved with *Hydrilla* monitoring, visit [ncseagrants.ncsu.edu/hydrilla](http://ncseagrants.ncsu.edu/hydrilla).