

Hydrilla

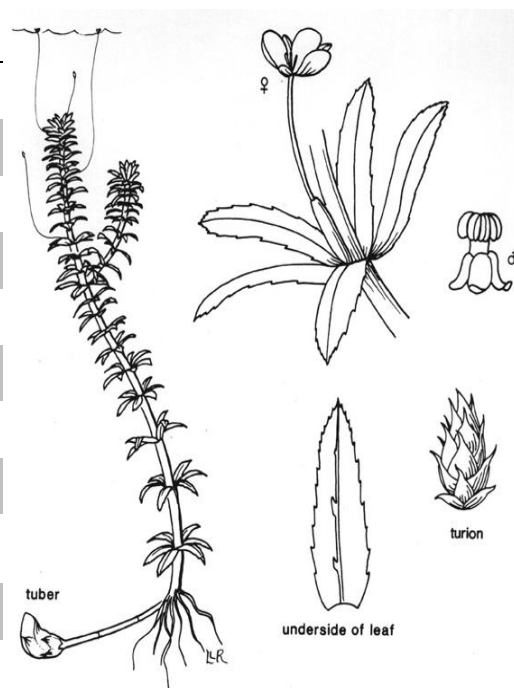
[*Hydrilla verticillata*]

DESCRIPTION

Hydrilla is a submersed perennial plant. The plant is rhizomatous and becomes more branched as the plant grows. Numerous branches (2-8) can form at each internode, and each slender stem can reach a length of 20 feet. The leaves are sessile and whorled around the stem. Each leaf is 1/3 in. long, and 1/8 in. wide and finely serrated. The midrib on the lower leaf surface is usually layered with spines. The spines can vary in number (from 0 – 12 per leaf). Both dioecious and monoecious strains of the weed exist, and have flowers that are small and translucent to white in color. Each flower is < 1/4 inch in diameter, and found on the upper branches of the plant in late summer and fall. Roots of the plant are rhizomatous, scaly, and anywhere from white to orange to brown in color. Tubers are formed at the ends of the roots during the fall or summer. One additional interesting feature of the plant is the presence of “turions”, which are winter buds and result in new plants. Hydrilla is a very fast-growing weed, and stems grow horizontally when they reach the surface of the water. The resulting vegetation forms a floating mat. Hydrilla can be confused with egeria, but is distinguishable by its rough texture.



CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Growth Season	perennial
Growth Habit	submersed
Leaflet Number	3-10 leaves per whorl
Leaf Margin	finely serrated
Leaf Hairs	none
Leaf/Leaflet Shape	oblong
Leaf Length	1/3 – 1/2 inch
Leaf Arrangement	whorled, 3-8 leaves/ whorl
Root Type	rhizomatous; tubers may be at ends of rhizomes
Flower Color	translucent to white





hydrilla flower



hydrilla (L) and egeria (R)

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References:

Line drawings:

University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. Used with permission. Available online from <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/slidecol.html>

Text:

Aulback-Smith, C. A., and de Kozlowski, S. J. 1996. Aquatic and Wetland Plants of South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.