

Hydrilla

Scientific name: *Hydrilla verticillata*
Origin: Southeast Asia
Introduction: Early 1950s, aquarium trade
Aquatic community: Submersed, surface mats
Habitat: Inches to 35 feet deep
Distribution: Statewide
Management effort: Maintenance control
2002 public waters / plant acres: 175 / 48,715
(tubers cover estimated 108,980 acres)



Dense hydrilla growth at water surface

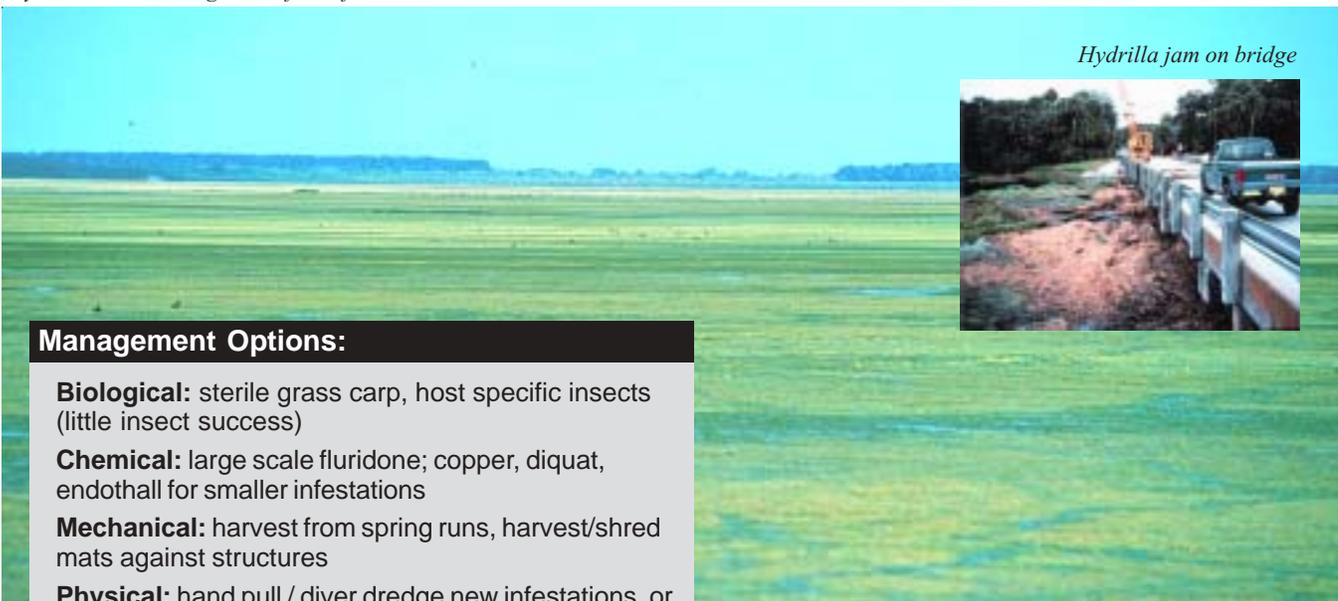
Environmental and Economic Concerns

- Grows an inch or more per day in deepest Florida waters.
- Can cover water bodies 1-2 years after introduction.
- 80% of plant mass is in the upper two feet of water column;
 - blocks sunlight and kills native plants,
 - blocks air exchange and consumes oxygen - fish kills,
 - virtually stops access, navigation, and recreation,
 - breaks loose and jams against bridges and dams.
- Reduces water activity-based incomes and property values.
- Doubles sedimentation rate from scensing leaves and stems.
- Disperses by fragments, buds, and runners (no seeds).
- Resists control via underground propagules (tubers);
 - millions produced per acre,
 - no effective tuber control method,
 - lie dormant as long as 7 years.



Hydrilla sprouting from tuber

Hydrilla mat covering the surface of a Florida lake



Hydrilla jam on bridge

Management Options:

- Biological:** sterile grass carp, host specific insects (little insect success)
Chemical: large scale fluridone; copper, diquat, endothall for smaller infestations
Mechanical: harvest from spring runs, harvest/shred mats against structures
Physical: hand pull / diver dredge new infestations, or in fast flowing water