INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

Hydrilla
(*Hydrilla verticillata*)

Hydrilla leaves
Photo: Jon Rodgers

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

DESCRIPTION

- Submerged, freshwater perennial herb that is native to Africa, Asia, and Australia.
- Mostly grows rooted but is occasionally detached and floating.
- Has erect, branching stems that are 0.8 cm to 1 cm thick.
- Whorls of 3 to 8, typically 5, translucent, lance-shaped leaves featuring toothed margins and midribs that are rough to the touch.
- Root structure consists of rhizomes tipped with small tubers and horizontal stolons.
- Flowers extend to the water surface via threadlike stalks up to 10 cm long. They are 2-4 mm long, white, solitary, and funnel shaped.
- Hydrilla can be distinguished from look-alikes by the presence of tubers (0.5 to 1 cm long, off-white to yellowish, potato-like structures buried in the sediment). Brazilian elodea and waterweeds do not have tubers.

PRIMARY THREATS: Restricts flow in waterways and reduces light penetration, altering fish habitat. Outcompetes native aquatic vegetation.

Hydrilla infestation
Photo: Earl Chilton, Texas Parks and Wildlife

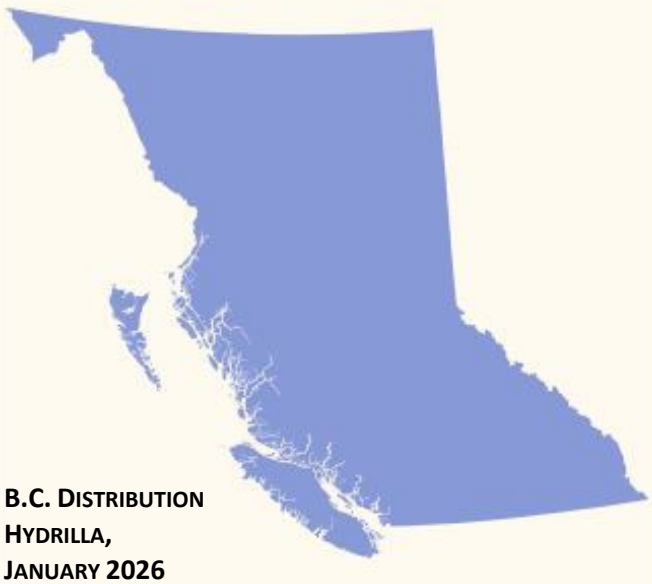
BIOLOGY & SPREAD

- Reproduces vegetatively by stem fragments, tubers and turions (bud-like structures which drop off the plant and successfully survive freezing or drought).
- Stem fragments consisting of a single node are capable of regrowth
- Viable seed production seldom occurs.
- Local dispersal occurs mainly by waterfowl, fur bearing wildlife and water currents.
- Primary sources of long-distance spread are intentional introduction to ornamental water-gardens or aquariums, and unintentional transport on recreational boats.
- For more information: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants

BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2026

Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*)



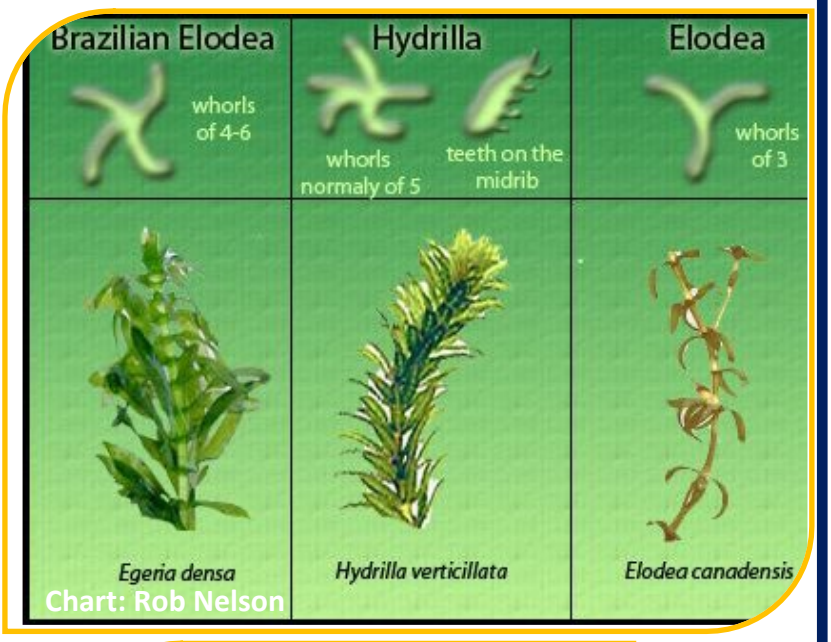
B.C. Distribution
Hydrilla,
January 2026

Habitat

- Hydrilla prefers slow-moving freshwater waterbodies and brackish estuaries, tolerating up to 7% salinity. It may grow in springs, lakes, marches, rivers, tidal zones, and canals.
- It grows well in low light and CO_2.
- While it tolerates far greater extremes, it prefers temperate and tropical waters with temperatures ranging from 20-24 degrees Celsius.
- Can grow in water up to 6 m deep (12 m deep in non-turbid water).

Distribution & Status

- Not yet known to occur in BC; has previously occurred in Washington State.
- Management goal is establishment prevention in BC.



Report Invasive Species

Download the App!

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

What Can You Do?

- **REPORT** new sightings
- **Check** waterbodies before using watercraft
- **Clean, Drain, Dry** watercraft after use in any waterbody
- **Treat** Hydrilla before disturbing a site with machinery

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