

Vermont Invasive Exotic Plant Fact Sheet

East Indian hygrophila, Oriental ludwigia,
Indian swampweed, Miramar weed, Hygro
Hygrophila polysperma (Roxb.) T. Anders.
Water-willow family
Vermont Class A Noxious Weed

Description: A rooted and rhizomatous perennial aquatic herb. Submersed to slightly emergent, growing to 6 feet (1.8 meters) long and rarely terrestrial. Grows through water column, and forms floating mats after detaching from substrate. Emerged stems are squarish, while submersed stems are round. Leaves are light green, opposite, sparsely hairy, elliptic with pointed tips, without stalks (submersed leaves may have shore stalks), up to 1.5 inches (4 cm) long and 0.5 (1.3 cm) inches wide. Flowers are axillary with no stalks. Petals are white to bluish-white with two "lips," upper lip 2-lobed, lower lip 3-lobed. Fruit is a narrow capsule with 20 to 30 seeds. Plant is brittle.

Habitat: Prefers flowing water in warmer climates, but is also found in canals, ditches, marshes, and lakes. Can start growing in low light before other plants do. Tolerant of a wide range of pH and water hardness conditions.

Threats: This plant fragments easily and reproduces mainly by vegetative means from plant fragments (may also reproduce by seed). *Hygrophila polysperma* is fast-growing, and outcompetes other plants (even hydrilla in some cases). It clogs canals and culverts interfering with water flow and flood control operations, and presents a navigation barrier.

Distribution: Native to India and Malaysia. Introduced into the United States as an aquarium plant (and is still sold by aquarium dealers) about 1945. It has been well established in Florida and Texas since the 1960s.

Control: Control of this plant is very difficult. It is tolerant of many herbicides. Mechanical harvesting or any chopping fragments the plants and increases their distribution.



(IFAS, 1990. Center for Aquatic Plants, University of Florida, Gainesville)

* No person may use pesticides, biological controls, bottom barriers, structural controls or powered mechanical devices in waters of the state to control nuisance aquatic vegetation, insects or other aquatic life including lamprey unless that person has been issued a permit by the secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources.

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Water-willow family (*Acanthaceae*)

References:

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov>

<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/seagrant/hygp02.html>

Ramey, Victor. 1990 *Florida Prohibited Aquatic Plants*, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Rule 16C-52.



For more information about Vermont's invasive exotic plant species or if you would like to know how you can help, please contact:

The Nature Conservancy of Vermont, 27 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602
Tel: 802-229-4425

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 103 S. Main St., Bldg. 10 North,
Waterbury, VT 05671-0408 Tel. 802-241-3777

Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, 103 S. Main St., Bldg. 10 South, Waterbury, VT
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Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 103 S. Main St., Bldg. 10 South,
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