

Hydrilla is a Class 'A' noxious weed found in many lakes in southeastern United States including North Carolina. Hydrilla was first identified in Lake Gaston in 1988, although it is suspected that it was present for a few years before it was identified.

Hydrilla is very aggressive and out competes Eurasian watermilfoil and Brazilian elodea. Currently, hydrilla has infested over 5,000 acres of Lake Gaston. In states where hydrilla has become well established, millions of dollars are spent each year on management activities. And, this is true with the fight against hydrilla in Lake Gaston.



Dense mats alter water quality by raising pH, decreasing oxygen under the mats, and increasing water temperature. Stagnant water created by hydrilla mats provides good breeding grounds for mosquitos. Hydrilla interferes with recreational activities such as swimming, boating and fishing. Also, hydrilla has the potential to impact power generation and irrigation by clogging dam trash pipes and intake pipes.

An aggressive eradication plan has been in effect since 1995, between local landowners, the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council, and the state of North Carolina's Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). Control methods include annual surveys, biological assessment of the tuber growth, annual Sonar applications as necessary and grass carp to assist in the removal of plants and tubers. Sonar treatments controlled the hydrilla plant, but it is not effective on the tuber bank in the sediment. The Sonar treatments continue to target the new plants as they emerge and prevent new tuber production. Sonar also prevents any spread by fragmentation.