

### In the Water

didymo

[WaterLettuce](#) This invasive plant, native to the tropics, was first seen in the tidal Potomac in 2007. The plant is commonly found in ornamental ponds and is sold in pond stores. Left unchecked in natural systems, the plant, which floats on the water's surface, can very quickly form dense, impenetrable mats that can shade out native submerged vegetation, lower dissolved oxygen levels by covering the water's surface, impede boating and fishing, and can create breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The plants themselves do not survive in cooler winter water, but it is unknown whether its seeds, which fall to the river bottom, can survive the winter to repopulate in the next season.

Last summer, after the plant was spotted in Mattawoman Creek, other stands of plants were found in the river about 10 miles up-and down-stream.

People who find the plant on the river should remove it and dispose of it safely on land. The U.S. Geological Survey is leading a coalition of agencies that will actively monitor for the plant. The public also can report sightings of the plant to [Mark Lewandowski](#) of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at 410.260.8634. The DNR also has applied for funding to control water lettuce and water chestnut, another invasive plant that has been a problem for years. Alternatively, river watchers can call ICPRB at 301.984.1908 x 107 with reports that will be forwarded.

While researchers wait to see if water lettuce has successfully overwintered or will be accidentally reintroduced to the river this summer, there is something all who care about the Potomac can do: Please remember to never place any plant or animal purchased at a store into the river, and work to raise awareness of friends and neighbors to the dangers of introducing non-native species in our river.

## **Invasive Species**

Written by Administrator - Last Updated Monday, 16 June 2008 17:15

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hydrilla

snakeheads

### **On the Land**

Asian stiltgrass

Japanese hops

multiflora rose

tree-of-heaven