



Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

Catalog of Species Search Results



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Egeria densa

(Brazilian water-weed)

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COMMON NAME

Brazilian water-weed

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

Egeria densa Planch.

FAMILY NAME COMMON

Frog's Bit family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Hydrocharitaceae

IMAGES



Flower



Leaves on stem



Leaf whorl

NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: *Anacharis densa* (Planch.) Vict.
Elodea densa (Planch.) Casp.

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

Egeria densa is a submersed, freshwater, perennial herb whose stems are usually 0.3-0.6 m (1-2 ft.) long, though they can be longer (up to 20 ft.). It is usually rooted in the substrate. The stems are cylindrical and simple or branched. The leaves and stems are bright green in color. The leaves are usually around 2 cm (0.8 in.) long and arranged in whorls of 4-6 leaves. The leaf margins have fine teeth that can be seen with the aid of a hand lens (10x).

The flowers have three white petals that are approximately 2 cm (0.75 in.) across and are situated about 2.5 cm (1 in.) above the water. These flowers, if present, can be seen from the summer to the fall.

Page References Crow & Hellquist 28, Flora of North America 32, Gleason & Cronquist 636, Holmgren 606, Magee & Ahles 130. See reference section below for full citations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Elodea canadensis Michx.

Elodea nuttallii (Planch.) St. John

Hydrilla verticillata (L.f.) Royle

| Character | <i>Egeria densa</i> | <i>Hydrilla verticillata</i> | Native <i>Elodea</i> species |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Leaf length | 1.2 - 4 cm | 0.6 - 1.7 cm | 0.6 - 1.7 cm |
| Leaf whorls | 4 (6) | (2), 4 - 6 | 3 |
| Leaf margins | Fine teeth seen with 10x lens | Conspicuously toothed | Appearing entire |
| Lower leaf midrib | Toothless | May be toothed | Toothless |
| Flower size | Large (> 1.5 cm) | Small (< 1 cm) | Small (< 1 cm) |

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

Egeria densa reproduces vegetatively from plant fragments. These fragments are dispersed by water birds and by attaching to boats. Fragments or entire plants can also come from disposed aquariums and water gardens.

DISTRIBUTION

Egeria densa is native to the central Minas Geraes region of Brazil. It is also native to the coastal areas of Argentina and Uruguay. This plant has invaded several countries in Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Chile. In the United States the plant is present in the Pacific Northwest, California, Utah, Illinois, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, the Southeast and in the East from New England to Florida. It is not yet present in Maine or Rhode Island.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

The first record of this plant outside of cultivation is from 1893 in Millneck, Long Island. It was offered for sale in the U.S. in 1915. (The first European record is in 1910 in a canal in Leipzig, Germany). It first appeared in Massachusetts around 1940 in Abington. The first official record of *Egeria densa* in Connecticut was in 1992 from Westport. *Egeria densa* was a popular aquarium plant because it was a good "oxygenator." It was likely transmitted into natural areas via people pouring their aquaria into nearby lakes.

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Aquatic
Lake or Pond
River or Stream

Egeria densa can be found in both still and flowing water. These include lakes, ponds, small streams and ditches. In the Northeast it is usually found in small ponds.

THREATS

Egeria densa forms dense monotypic stands that crowd out native aquatic plants. It also provides a very poor habitat for fish. It reproduces easily via plant fragments. This plant also interferes with fishing, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. It is considered a noxious weed in some states.

MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Washington State Department of Ecology](#)

[California Invasive Plant Council](#)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: Herbarium specimen or mounted snippet of the whole plant.

Best time for documentation: Spring, summer, fall.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Taxonomic information about the species

[The PLANTS Database](#)

General information and map

[Portland State University, Center for Lakes and Reservoirs](#)

[University of Florida - Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants](#)

General information and photographs

[Invasivespecies.gov](#)

Links to more information

[Environmental Laboratory - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Distribution map of U.S.

[University of Maine Cooperative Extension](#)

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DATA RETRIEVAL

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MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

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