NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Aquatic Weed Fact Sheet

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Brazilian Elodea or Egeria

Egeria densa

Brazilian elodea or egeria is a submersed member of the Hydrocharitaceae family native to South America. It was introduced by the aquarium trade and currently is the top-selling aquatic plant for use in aquaria as "oxygenators". It has been sold under several names including "oxygenating plant", elodea, and Anacharis, and often has been confused with its close relative, hydrilla, which it resembles closely and with which it often occurs in mixed stands. Egeria grows either rooted in the bottom or free-floating and is found in streams, ponds, and lakes throughout the southern United States. It forms dense surface mats which block light penetration, interfere with boating and recreation, and degrade habitat for fish and waterfowl. Egeria is highly invasive and is common throughout North Carolina, where it has become a nuisance in small ponds to large impoundments. The soft, slender, green stems of Egeria may grow to six feet or longer and may be highly branched. Wherever branches occur, two nodes (stem joints) are compacted closely together, giving the impression that the node is doubled. Fine, unbranched white roots form at the double nodes, and only fragments containing this double node can grow into new plants. In direct contrast to hydrilla, egeria does not produce either tubers or axillary turions as overwintering structures. Leaves are strap-like, about 1 in. long, and usually occur in whorls of 4 at a node. Occasionally 3 to 6 may be present, and the double nodes usually have 8 leaves. Very fine serrations may be seen on the leaf margins with a hand lens. Flowers are about 3/4 in. across and have 3 petals. They occur on a short stalk about an inch above the water and are produced primarily in the spring through early summer, but occasionally appear later in the *growing season.* Only the male (staminate) plants are present in the United States, so reproduction occurs only vegetatively by fragmentation.

For additional information visit our web site at:
http://www.cropsci.ncsu.edu/aquaticweeds

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