

Indian swampweed

Hygrophila polysperma

Description

This species is listed on the Federal Noxious Weed list. Square stems may aid in identification.

Habit

Herbaceous perennial, rooted, dicot, primarily aquatic. Rare terrestrial form in moist soils.

Leaves

Opposite, sparsely hairy, elliptic to oblong, up to 6 cm (1.5 in) long and 2 cm (0.5 in) wide, variable colors; light green to brown to reddish.

Stems

Creeping ascendant (rarely erect); up to 6ft in length or longer; upper most emersed stems may be squarish; brittle and easily break into fragments.

Flowers



Small, 3/8 in long; solitary; no stalks; found in leaf axils in the upper parts of the immersed stems; bluish-white to white petals; hairy; two "lips", upper lip 2-lobed, lower lip 3-lobed; calyx is hairy with 5 equal lobes; blooms October through March.

Fruits and Seeds

Narrow capsule 6-7 mm long; 20-30 tiny flattened-round seeds.

Habitat

Native to India. Found in lakes, streams and rivers, still and moving water, up to 3 m (10 ft) in depth. Grows from bottom to water surface.

Reproduction

Vegetatively, by small stem and leaf fragments, possibly by seed; spread by mechanical harvesters, boats and water currents.

Similar

Alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) has large, white, papery flowers.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Difficult to control, only herbicide known to work contains the ingredient, endothall.

Credits

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