INDIAN SWAMPWEED
Hygrophilia polysperma

Description: Indian swampweed, sometimes referred to as miramar weed or hygro, is a submersed perennial herb. Its brittle, squarish stems creep to 6 feet in length and are usually rooted. Leaves are opposite, round, and hairy, up to 3 inches long and 0.8 inches wide with pointed tips. Leaves are sessile, meaning the leaf base is directly attached to the plant stem and are light green, brown, or red in color. Its white flowers are small, with 2 lobes on the upper lip and 3 lobes on the lower lip. Solitary flowers form in the uppermost leaf axils. Though it does produce seeds, Indian swampweed spreads by plant fragments.

Ecological threat: Indian swampweed is a fast-growing and fast-spreading invasive, reportedly increasing its population from 0.1 acre to 10 acres on a lake in Florida in just 1 year. It is able to photosynthesize in low-light environments, giving it a competitive advantage over other submersed plants, including another invasive, hydrilla. It prefers fast-flowing water and can form dense, monotypic stands 10 feet deep or more. In southern Florida, Indian swampweed has clogged irrigation and flood-control canals and interfered with navigation. It is able to alter water hydrology and chemistry, negatively impacting native flora and fauna, and reducing biodiversity.

Indian swampweed is prohibited in Indiana and Minnesota.

Current North American Range: Populations of Indian swampweed are found in the southeastern US, particularly in Florida, Texas, and Kentucky.

Native Range: India, Malaysia

For up-to-date management options, see http://www.cabi.org/isc/?compid=5&dsid=28135&loadmodule =datasheet&page=481&site=144.