

Help prevent the spread of aquatic Didymo A.K.A ROCK SNOT

What is Didymo and how will it affect me?

Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), is a highly invasive alga that attaches to plants, rocks and other hard substrates in rivers and streams. Also called rock snot due to its slimy, wet toilet paper like appearance, Didymo can produce thick mats that cover the streambed, making fishing, swimming, or paddling impossible or undesirable. Infestation by Didymo can cause serious environmental effects such as a loss of habitat for fish and other organisms. Although not yet in Massachusetts, Didymo has been identified in Vermont's White and Battenkill Rivers, and portions of the Connecticut River in both Vermont and New Hampshire.

How do I prevent the spread of Didymo?

A single drop of water can spread Didymo, and once it has invaded a waterway it is difficult or impossible to remove. We recommend the **Check, Clean, and Dry** approach for preventing the spread of Didymo and other non-native invasive species:

Check: Always visually inspect all surfaces that come into contact with a water body, and remove all plant and animal debris for disposal in the trash. Empty bait buckets, live wells and engine water on dry land away from shore.

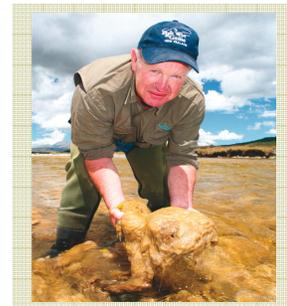
Clean: Soak absorbent materials such as cloth, felt soled waders, or wet suits in hot (uncomfortable to the touch) soapy water for 30 minutes. For hard surfaces, wash with hot, soapy water or 2% bleach solution (1/3 cup per gallon) for one full minute. Before using bleach, make sure that it will not damage the item being washed. Wash all items on dry land well away from the water's edge, and do not empty cleaning solutions or waste water back into the water body or into storm drains. Consider washing larger items (ex. boats) at a car wash.

Dry: Make sure all items, particularly absorbent materials, are completely dry before transferring to another water body. For large items where cleaning may not be feasible (ex kayaks, boats), all surfaces should be thoroughly dried for at least 48 hours before use.

How do I recognize Didymo and who should I contact if I find it?

Colonies of Didymo start out as a single, microscopic organism, and develop into visible clumps that attach to the substrate. Although generally brown or tan in color, large mats of Didymo may appear gray or white as the stalk tips fray. Didymo looks slimy and cloud-like, yet to the touch it has a rough fibrous texture similar to wool or a cotton ball.

Didymo can start out small, but has the ability to develop into thick mats as seen below:



If you think you see Didymo, please take a photograph and report the location to:
Michelle Robinson 508-792-7423 x 314 michelle.robinson@state.ma.us