

What's in Your Stream

Oh no, beware, rock snot grows here, stay away, the farther you can, may be the better. Now you may be asking what rock snot is and why it is a problem. The real name is *Didymosphenia geninata* a.k.a 'rock snot' or more commonly known as 'didymo'. Didymo is a problem because it is affecting habitats for the smaller creatures in the streams. I decided to learn about how the habitat is being disturbed by the ways people try to remove Didymo. These ways can be very harmful.

Didymo is a freshwater alga. Didymo makes stalks that weave into mats that can be up to 10-12 inches wide. When the Didymo gets on the rocks, its little stalks wave in the water, but all the little stalks weave together and make a mat that's 10-12 inches long. This gross alga is brownish to tan and white. Some people say that it feels like wet cotton and looks like a sewage spill. Didymo is a single celled diatom that spreads really fast because it is hard to see with a naked eye and can spread in many ways. A diatom is a single celled atom with two parts. Didymo is in most streams and is affecting the food chain.

Didymo wasn't hard to learn about because it's just about everywhere. This attacking alga is in New Zealand, Maryland, VT, NH, Sweden, Finland, Turkey, Pakistan, Connecticut River, Mongolia, China, Canada, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Iceland, Russian Federation, Alaska and a couple of other places like France. It's funny because Didymo dies in the winter's cold water but it can be found in Alaska. My class has learned about it, and we found out that it is a really bad kind of algae and we decided that we would take charge and alert the people.

Some things surprise me about Didymo: how fast it spreads, and how it is all over the world and how it is affecting the food chain. Didymo spreads when you try to remove it or when you go to more than one stream in a week. Didymo also spreads when you do not clean your equipment before going to another stream. Didymo attaches to rocks and spreads, while it does that its stalks make it unsuitable for the little organisms. In other words, it makes it so the macro invertebrates have no habitat to live. The fish eat the macro invertebrates and if there is no food for the fish they will die. Then if there are no fish, people won't fish and that will lead to no money because the fisherman buys products to fish. Didymo fouls equipment for those that go in the water. Well, one thing is that you should remove it so it will stop killing macro invertebrates but the way you remove it can be harmful and cost you a lot of money.

You can remove Didymo but there are always side effects that are harmful to the habitats. Didymo spreads if you did not wash your equipment, or if you try to remove it and some breaks and goes down the stream, and many more ways. Some ways to remove it are:

- ❖ **Hand removal-** (can lead to--can kill other plants that's not Rock Snot) **Labor work**
- ❖ **Chemicals, biocide-**(lead to—may impact non- targeted species, more chemical to water body and more)**cost of \$200-\$1,000 per acre**
- ❖ **Harvesting-**(can lead to-- oil spills and use a lot of energy) **cost of \$350-\$1,500 per acre**
- ❖ **Dredging-**(can lead to—devastating entire eco system)**cost of \$16,000-\$32,000 per acre**
- ❖ **Biological control-**(can lead to—kills all insects) **\$ cost of insects**

These ways I listed may sound bad, (well then you should keep reading to find out more about Didymo.) It is important to try not to clean Didymo, those ways because they will disturb the entire site where you put the cleaner. Some easy ways to try to stop it are freezing, and or soak in hot water for 40 minutes. Your equipment will be clean to keep fishing. I think they should try to come up with a solution that is less harmful to the habitat. People need to look out for the littler thing in the water like the tiny organisms.

In conclusion, I think the ways to remove Didymo are very harmful for the habitat and the creatures. Didymo needs to be stopped but has been out voted by other problems. Below is a web site that you can go to, to find out more info if you want to. Didymo is hard to get rid of without harming the habitat. How are we going to stop it?

"Plant Control Techniques."

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/management.htm>. Web. 2 Nov. 2009..