

Didymo

Do you know what's been in your waters lately? Well, you might have *Didymosphenia geminata* in a river by you. Some other names for *Didymosphenia geminata* are Didymo or rock snot. Didymo is a type of algae that has been stable for about 100 years but it has taken off and is spreading fast and causing concern to many places. Do you know the history of Didymo?

Didymo is weird. Didymo is a freshwater diatom species (microscopic algae.) A diatom is a cell that has two identical chambers. It can spread with just one diatom. The single cell creates a stalk that is attached on rocks. On the river bottom, the Didymo forms mats of algae that cover the river bottom. Unlike other algae, it is yellow and brown. It looks slimy, but it's not. It actually feels like wet cotton wool. It looks kind of like a sewage spill. It also sometimes looks like wet toilet paper as the river moves it. Didymo has spread all throughout the world.

Didymo has spread insanely. In the 1800's Didymo was out competed by other algae in Scotland, Finland, Sweden, and Northern China. Didymo was out competed in cold, low nutrient waters. In the 1980's, it spread throughout North America and Europe. In the 1990's it spread to British Columbia, Alberta and California. It spread to Montana in 2001. Also that year it was discovered in the southern hemisphere. In 2002 it spread to South Dakota. Didymo spread to New Zealand in 2004. Until 2006 it was unheard of in northeast America. In 2006 it was discovered in Virginia. Now it is in 49/50 states. I've also made a chart on the next page if you would like to look at that.

Didymo has spread over the years. If you get Didymo on you, it might affect your eyes and skin and you should report and send a dime sized sample to:

Didymo Identification
Water Quality Division
103 S. Main St., Bldg 10N, First Floor
Waterbury VT (802) 241-3770 or 241-3777.

I don't want to spread Didymo, but I would like to touch it even though that my eyes and skin might hurt.

Place	When	What it did
Scotland, Finland, Sweden and Northern China	1800's	Didymo was out competed in cold, low nutrient waters
North America and Europe	1980's	Spread to
British Columbia, Alberta and California	1990's	Spread to
Montana	2001	Spread to
Southern Hemisphere	2001	Discovered
South Dakota	2002	Spread to
New Zealand	2004	Spread to
Northeast America	2006	Discovered
Virginia	2006	Spread to
49/50 states	Now (2009)	It's in

"Invasive Species."

www.mdinvasivesp.org/archived_invaders/archived_invaders_2008_05.html. Web. 18 Nov. 2009.

Global Invasive Species Database."

www.issg.org/database/species/ecology.asp?si=775&fr=1&sts. 16 May 2007. Web. 17 Nov. 2009.