

DIDYMO...

spread the word, not the algae

What is didymo?

Didymo is an invasive **freshwater alga** that can form massive blooms of the single celled diatom.

Didymo can smother streambeds and adversely affect freshwater fish, plants and invertebrate populations by depriving them of habitat. It can also impact recreational opportunities but is not considered a human health risk at this time. Didymo develops stalks to attach itself to the streambed. These stalks can form a thick brown mat, effectively covering the entire river channel. Didymo can entangle itself in streamside vegetation resembling wet tissue paper but with a feel that is more similar to wet cotton.



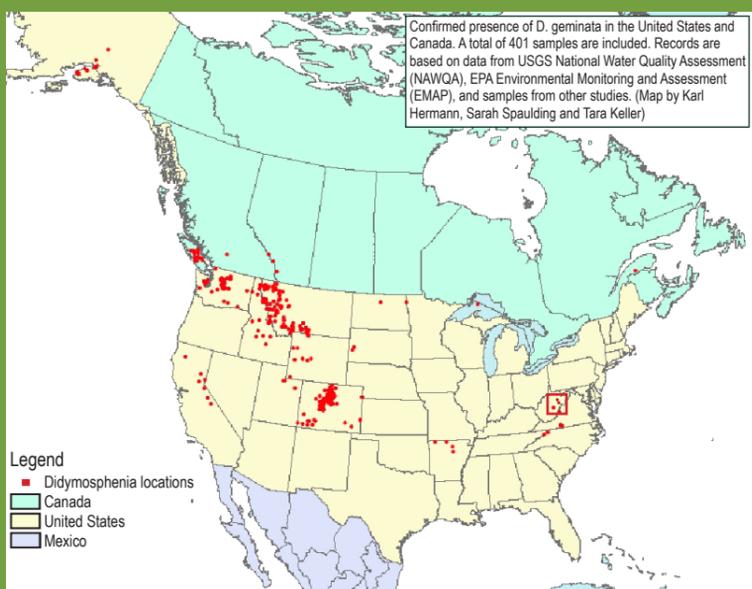
Didymo on stream substrate in Gandy Creek, WV

Where is didymo?

Didymo was found here in **West Virginia** in 2008.

To date, it has been identified in the Elk River around Webster Springs, in Glady Fork north of Alpena, and in Gandy Creek near Whitmer. Didymo originated from the cold clear waters of northern Europe and North America. It is unknown how didymo was spread into West Virginia. It is thought to be spread by recreational equipment including boats, kayaks, life jackets and fishing gear – particularly waders and felt-soled boots. It only takes one cell or a fragment of a stalk to contaminate a new waterway.

Didymo is also present in Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and several New England and western states.

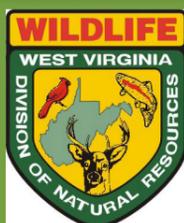


Source: http://www.epa.gov/region8/water/didymosphenia/na_dis.map.pdf, 2007
Note: This map has been modified to reflect West Virginia locations

How can you prevent the spread of didymo?

There are **four steps** you can take:

- **CHECK:** Before leaving the river, look for strands of algae on your equipment. Remove them and leave them on site.
- **CLEAN:** choose a method that will not harm your equipment Soak items for one minute in a 2% bleach solution (1 cup of bleach mixed with 3 gallons of water) or a 5% solution of salt, anti-septic hand cleaner or dishwashing detergent (2.5 cups mixed with 3 gallons of water). Scrub or spray larger items such as watercraft, with the same solution ensuring surface contact for at least one minute.
- **DRY:** If cleaning is not practical, allow all items that came in contact with the water to completely dry then keep them dry for another 48 hours. Freezing is also effective.
- **LEAVE:** Fish, plants, rocks and vegetation should not be moved between waterways.



For more information go to:
<http://www.wvdnr.gov/Fishing/didymo.shtm>