

Calendar Year: 2005

State: Connecticut

Name of Project: Giant African Snail/Giant Salvinia/Hydrilla Survey and Educational Outreach

**Project Coordinator: Donna Ellis, State Survey Coordinator, University of Connecticut,
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Objective: The giant African snail (*Achatina fulica*) is recommended as a national CAPS target and high priority survey pest for calendar year 2005. The Eastern Pest Survey Committee has recommended giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) and hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) also be surveyed for during 2005. A combined pest detection survey is proposed for giant African snail, giant salvinia, and hydrilla. Giant African snails, although illegal in the U.S., are being increasingly used for science lessons by school teachers and subsequently released into the environment. The snails not only cause severe damage to many agricultural crops but also pose human health risks. Giant salvinia and hydrilla are Federal Noxious Weeds that are serious threats to water bodies in several southern states. Hydrilla has been found in several ponds in Connecticut and elsewhere in New England. These invasive aquatic plants may be spreading to new locations via the aquarium and water garden trades. A visual detection survey and educational outreach project is proposed to determine the presence or absence of and disseminate information to increase awareness of the three non-native pests in Connecticut. This project is proposed as a collaboration between the University of Connecticut and The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

Benefits: Results of the proposed survey and educational outreach project will help prevent new water bodies in Connecticut from becoming invaded, thereby minimizing subsequent impacts of an invasion (reduction of oxygen levels, destroying fish habitat, clogging waterways, impeding irrigation and navigation, and preventing recreational water use). Educational outreach for giant African snails to teachers and other educators will disseminate important information on this environmental and human health threat and alert the targeted groups and the public to the consequences of releasing this organism into the wild.

Project Category: Part I

Pests: Giant African Snail, Giant Salvinia, and Hydrilla

Materials and Methods: A visual survey for giant African snails, giant salvinia and hydrilla is proposed during 2005. The Project Coordinator and/or a research technician will visit and inspect a minimum of 24 garden centers, water gardens, and pet shops in the 4 northern Connecticut counties (Hartford, Litchfield, Tolland, and Windham Counties; approximately 6 sites per county). Educational materials (Pest Alerts, handouts, pamphlets) will be compiled and distributed by University of Connecticut and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station staff to garden center managers, water garden suppliers, pet shops, and the general public during the survey period. For giant African snail educational outreach, information will also be disseminated to Connecticut school teachers, superintendents, public libraries and other events.

Products Produced: Survey results will provide needed information on the potential introduction and spread of giant African snails, giant salvinia, and hydrilla in Connecticut. Educational outreach will be provided to aquatic plant nurseries, suppliers of water garden plants, pet shops, teachers and superintendents, and the general public to alert them to these potential new problems in the state. Presence/absence data from the proposed survey will provide relevant information to stakeholders in learning about the range of these exotic pests in Connecticut. Management options will be provided in the event that the target organisms are found. A communication network will be established to exchange timely information on any occurrences of the three exotic pests.

Delivery Dates: The Project Coordinator and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station staff will investigate sources of aquatic plants and snails in Connecticut during the winter and spring of 2005, prior to conducting the survey. Cooperative Extension Educators and other contacts that are involved with water gardens and aquatic plants will also be contacted. The survey will be conducted between June and September 2005. Plant voucher specimens will be collected and identified by October. Educational materials will be compiled between January and April 2005. Suspect organisms will be collected and screened by the Project Coordinator. Confirmation of positive records will be made by appropriate specialists. The State Survey Coordinator will enter presence/absence survey data for giant African snails, giant salvinia, and hydrilla into the NAPIS database. For positive occurrences, survey delimiting information will be collected and submitted to NAPIS. New state and new county records will be entered into NAPIS within 48 hours of confirmation of identification by a qualified identifier. All other non-critical occurrence data, supportive information, and redundant records for the exotic pest will be compiled and entered into the NAPIS database by the State Survey Coordinator within two weeks of confirmation of data quality.