

## Aquatic Plant Management Through Control of Plant Canopy

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Aquatic weed control approaches have historically aimed at reducing total weed biomass without focusing on the structure of the plant canopy. Yet it is the architecture of aquatic plants, as well as their standing crop which causes them to be problematic. Thus, low-stature plants, or plants whose vertical biomass distribution in the water column allows for open zones may not interfere with use of the aquatic sites. By focusing on control of canopy structure, through integration of a variety of techniques, more environmentally benign management may be achievable. Recent studies employing sublethal rates of the sulfonylurea herbicide bensulfuron methyl, and plant growth regulators have demonstrated that canopies of hydrilla, potamogeton species and eurasian watermilfoil can be altered so as to reduce their weedy characteristics. However, this approach necessitates the development of reliable assessment and evaluation of aquatic plant canopy, preferably via non-labor intensive, non-destructive methods. Examples include acoustical imaging, modified commercial "canopy analyzers", and a variety of photographic methods.